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GASTON BOISSIER
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MANAGING EDITOR

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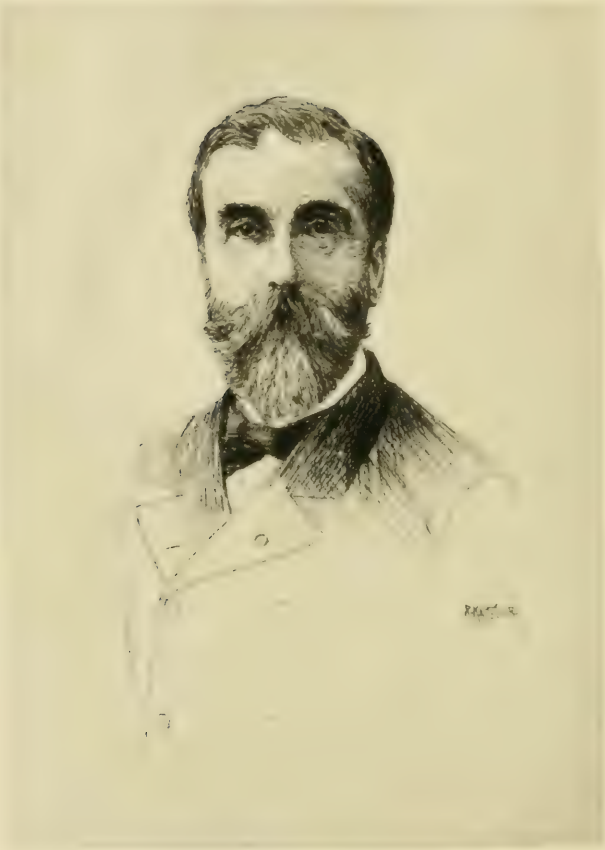

Ludovic Halevy

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THE IMMORTALS

The Abbé Constantin

(L'Abbé Constantin)

By LUDOVIC HALÉVY

CROWNED BY THE FRENCH ACADEMY

With a Preface by E. LEGOUVE, *of the French Academy, and Illustrations by* MADELEINE LEMAIRE

Published by MAISON MAZARIN
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LUDOVIC HALÉVY

UDOVIC HALEVY was born in Paris, January 1, 1834. His father was Léon Halévy, the celebrated author; his grandfather, Fromenthal, the eminent composer. Ludovic was destined for the civil service, and, after finishing his studies, entered successively the Department of State (1852); the Algerian Department (1858), and later on became editorial secretary of the Corps Legislatif (1860). When his patron, the Duc de Morny, died in 1865, Halévy resigned, giving up a lucrative position for the uncertain profession of a playwright. At this period he devoted himself exclusively to the theatre.

He had already written plays as early as 1856, and had also tried his hand at fiction, but did not meet with very great success. Toward 1860, however, he became acquainted with Henri Meilhac, and with him formed a kind of literary union, lasting for almost twenty years, when Halévy rather abruptly abandoned the theatre and became a writer of fiction.

We have seen such kinds of co-partnerships, for instance, in Beaumont and Fletcher; more recently in the beautiful French tales of Erckmann-Chatrian, and still later in the English novels of Besant and Rice.

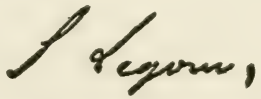
Some say it was a fortunate event for Meilhac; others assert that Halévy reaped a great profit by the union. Be this as it may, a great number of plays—drama, comedy, farce, opera, operetta and ballet—were jointly produced, as is shown by the title-pages of two score or more of their pieces. When Ludovic Halévy was a candidate for L'Académie—he entered that glorious body in 1884—the question was ventilated by Pailleron: "What was the author's literary relation in his union with Meilhac?" It was answered by M. Sarcey, who criticised the character and quality of the work achieved. Public opinion has a long time since brought in quite another verdict in the case.

Halévy's coöperation endowed the plays of Meilhac with a fuller ethical richness—tempered them, so to speak, and made them real, for it can not be denied that Meilhac was inclined to extravagance.

Halévy's novels are remarkable for the elegance of literary style, tenderness of spirit and keenness of observation. He excels in ironical sketches. He has often been compared to Eugène Sue, but his touch is lighter than Sue's, and his humor less unctuous. Most of his little sketches, originally written for *La Vie Parisienne*, were collected in his *Monsieur et Madame Cardinal* (1873); and *Les Petites Cardinal*, (1880). They are not intended *virginibus puerisque*, and the author's attitude is that of a half-pitying, half-contemptuous moralist, yet the virility of his criticism has brought him immortality.

Personal recollections of the great war are to be found in *L'Invasion* (1872); and *Notes et Souvenirs*, 1871–

1872 (1889). Most extraordinary, however, was the success of *L'Abbé Constantin* (1882), crowned by the Academy, which has gone through no less than one hundred and fifty editions up to 1904, and ranks as one of the greatest successes of contemporaneous literature. It is, indeed, his *chef-d'œuvre*, very delicate, earnest, and at the same time ironical, a most entrancing family story. It was then that the doors of the French Academy opened wide before Halévy. *L'Abbé Constantin* was adapted for the stage by Crémieux and Décourcelle (Le Gymnase, 1882). Further notable novels are: *Criquette*, *Deux Mariages*, *Un Grand Mariage*, *Un Mariage d'Amour*, all in 1883; *Princesse*, *Les Trois Coups de Foudre*, *Mon Camarade Moussard*, all in 1884; and the romances, *Karikari* (1892), and *Mariette* (1893). Since that time, I think, Halévy has not published anything of importance.



de l'Académie Française.

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THE ABBÉ CONSTANTIN

CHAPTER I

THE SALE OF LONGUEVAL

ITH a step still valiant and firm, an old priest walked along the dusty road in the full rays of a brilliant sun. For more than thirty years the Abbé Constantin had been Curé of the little village which slept there in the plain, on the banks of a slender stream called La Lizotte. The Abbé Constantin was walking by the wall which surrounded the park of the castle of Longueval; at last he reached the entrance-gate, which rested high and massive on two ancient pillars of stone, embrowned and gnawed by time. The Curé stopped, and mournfully regarded two immense blue posters fixed on the pillars.

The posters announced that on Wednesday, May 18, 1881, at one o'clock P.M., would take place, before the Civil Tribunal of Souvigny, the sale of the domain of Longueval, divided into four lots:

1. The castle of Longueval, its dependencies, fine pieces of water, extensive offices, park of 150 hectares in extent, completely surrounded by a wall, and tra-

versed by the little river Lizotte. Valued at 600,000 francs.

2. The farm of Blanche-Couronne, 300 hectares, valued at 500,000 francs.

3. The farm of La Rozeraie, 250 hectares, valued at 400,000 francs.

4. The woods and forests of La Mionne, containing 450 hectares, valued at 550,000 francs.

And these four amounts, added together at the foot of the bill, gave the respectable sum of 2,050,000 francs.

Then they were really going to dismember this magnificent domain, which, escaping all mutilation, had for more than two centuries always been transmitted intact from father to son in the family of Longueval. The placards also announced that after the temporary division into four lots, it would be possible to unite them again, and offer for sale the entire domain; but it was a very large morsel, and, to all appearance, no purchaser would present himself.

The Marquise de Longueval had died six months before; in 1873 she had lost her only son, Robert de Longueval; the three heirs were the grandchildren of the Marquise: Pierre, Hélène, and Camille. It had been found necessary to offer the domain for sale, as Hélène and Camille were minors. Pierre, a young man of three-and-twenty, had lived rather fast, was already half-ruined, and could not hope to redeem Longueval.

It was mid-day. In an hour it would have a new master, this old castle of Longueval; and this master, who would he be? What woman would take the place of the old Marquise in the chimney-corner of the grand

salon, all adorned with ancient tapestry?—the old Marquise, the friend of the old priest. It was she who had restored the church; it was she who had established and furnished a complete dispensary at the vicarage under the care of Pauline, the Curé's servant; it was she who, twice a week, in her great barouche, all crowded with little children's clothes and thick woolen petticoats, came to fetch the Abbé Constantin to make with him what she called *la chasse aux pauvres*.

The old priest continued his walk, musing over all this; then he thought, too—the greatest saints have their little weaknesses—he thought, too, of the beloved habits of thirty years thus rudely interrupted. Every Thursday and every Sunday he had dined at the castle. How he had been petted, coaxed, indulged! Little Camille—she was eight years old—would come and sit on his knee and say to him:

"You know, Monsieur le Curé, it is in your church that I mean to be married, and grandmamma will send such heaps of flowers to fill, quite fill the church—more than for the month of Mary. It will be like a large garden—all white, all white, all white!"

The month of Mary! It was then the month of Mary. Formerly, at this season, the altar disappeared under the flowers brought from the conservatories of Longueval. None this year were on the altar, except a few bouquets of lily-of-the-valley and white lilac in gilded china vases. Formerly, every Sunday at high mass, and every evening during the month of Mary, Mademoiselle Hébert, the reader to Madame de Longueval, played the little harmonium given by the Mar-

quise. Now the poor harmonium, reduced to silence, no longer accompanied the voices of the choir or the children's hymns. Mademoiselle Marbeau, the postmistress, would, with all her heart, have taken the place of Mademoiselle Hébert, but she dared not, though she was a little musical! She was afraid of being remarked as of the clerical party, and denounced by the Mayor, who was a Freethinker. That might have been injurious to her interests, and prevented her promotion.

He had nearly reached the end of the wall of the park —that park of which every corner was known to the old priest. The road now followed the banks of the Lizotte, and on the other side of the little stream stretched the fields belonging to the two farms; then, still farther off, rose the dark woods of La Mionne.

Divided! The domain was going to be divided! The heart of the poor priest was rent by this bitter thought. All that for thirty years had been inseparable, indivisible to him. It was a little his own, his very own, *his* estate, this great property. He felt at home on the lands of Longueval. It had happened more than once that he had stopped complacently before an immense cornfield, plucked an ear, removed the husk, and said to himself:

"Come! the grain is fine, firm, and sound. This year we shall have a good harvest!"

And with a joyous heart he would continue his way through *his* fields, *his* meadows, *his* pastures; in short, by every chord of his heart, by every tie of his life, by all his habits, his memories, he clung to this domain whose last hour had come.

The Abbé perceived in the distance the farm of Blanche-Couronne; its red-tiled roofs showed distinctly against the verdure of the forest. There, again, the Curé was at home. Bernard, the farmer of the Marquise, was his friend; and when the old priest was delayed in his visits to the poor and sick, when the sun was sinking below the horizon, and the Abbé began to feel a little fatigued in his limbs, and a sensation of exhaustion in his stomach, he stopped and supped with Bernard, regaled himself with a savory stew and potatoes, and emptied his pitcher of cider; then, after supper, the farmer harnessed his old black mare to his cart, and took the vicar back to Longueval. The whole distance they chatted and quarrelled. The Abbé reproached the farmer with not going to mass, and the latter replied:

"The wife and the girls go for me. You know very well, Monsieur le Curé, that is how it is with us. The women have enough religion for the men. They will open the gates of paradise for us."

And he added maliciously, while giving a touch of the whip to his old black mare:

"If there is one!"

The Curé sprang from his seat.

"What! if there is one! Of a certainty there is one."

"Then you will be there, Monsieur le Curé. You say that is not certain, and I say it is. You will be there, you will be there, at the gate, on the watch for your parishioners, and still busy with their little affairs; and you will say to St. Peter—for it is St. Peter, isn't it, who keeps the keys of paradise?"

"Yes, it is St. Peter."

"Well, you will say to him, to St. Peter, if he wants to shut the door in my face under the pretense that I did not go to mass—you will say to him: 'Bah! let him in all the same. It is Bernard, one of the farmers of Madame la Marquise, an honest man. He was common councilman, and he voted for the maintenance of the sisters when they were going to be expelled from the village school.' That will touch St. Peter, who will answer: 'Well, well, you may pass, Bernard, but it is only to please Monsieur le Curé.' For you will be Monsieur le Curé up there, and Curé of Longueval, too, for paradise itself would be dull for you if you must give up being Curé of Longueval."

Curé of Longueval! Yes, all his life he had been nothing but Curé of Longueval, had never dreamed of anything else, had never wished to be anything else. Three or four times excellent livings, with one or two curates, had been offered to him, but he had always refused them. He loved his little church, his little village, his little vicarage. There he had it all to himself, saw to everything himself; calm, tranquil, he went and came, summer and winter, in sunshine or storm, in wind or rain. His frame became hardened by fatigue and exposure, but his soul remained gentle, tender, and pure.

He lived in his vicarage, which was only a larger laborer's cottage, separated from the church by the churchyard. When the Curé mounted the ladder to train his pear and peach trees, over the top of the wall he perceived the graves over which he had said the last

prayer, and cast the first spadeful of earth. Then, while continuing his work, he said in his heart a little prayer for the repose of those among his dead whose fate disturbed him, and who might be still detained in purgatory. He had a tranquil and childlike faith.

But among these graves there was one which, oftener than all the others, received his visits and his prayers. It was the tomb of his old friend Dr. Reynaud, who had died in his arms in 1871, and under what circumstances! The doctor had been like Bernard; he never went to mass or to confession; but he was so good, so charitable, so compassionate to the suffering. This was the cause of the Curé's great anxiety, of his great solicitude. His friend Reynaud, where was he? Where was he? Then he called to mind the noble life of the country doctor, all made up of courage and self-denial; he recalled his death, above all his death, and said to himself:

"In paradise; he can be nowhere but in paradise. The good God may have sent him to purgatory just for form's sake—but he must have delivered him after five minutes."

All this passed through the mind of the old man, as he continued his walk toward Souvigny. He was going to the town, to the solicitor of the Marquise, to inquire the result of the sale; to learn who were to be the new masters of the castle of Longueval. The Abbé had still about a mile to walk before reaching the first houses of Souvigny, and was passing the park of Lavardens when he heard, above his head, voices calling to him:

"Monsieur le Curé, Monsieur le Curé."

At this spot adjoining the wall, a long alley of lime-trees bordered the terrace, and the Abbé, raising his head, perceived Madame de Lavardens, and her son Paul.

"Where are you going, Monsieur le Curé?" asked the Countess.

"To Souvigny, to the Tribunal, to learn——"

"Stay here—Monsieur de Larnac is coming after the sale to tell me the result."

The Abbé Constantin joined them on the terrace.

Gertrude de Lannilis, Countess de Lavardens, had been very unfortunate. At eighteen she had been guilty of a folly, the only one of her life, but that one—irreparable. She had married for love, in a burst of enthusiasm and exaltation, M. de Lavardens, one of the most fascinating and brilliant men of his time. He did not love her, and only married her from necessity; he had devoured his patrimonial fortune to the very last farthing, and for two or three years had supported himself by various expedients. Mademoiselle de Lannilis knew all that, and had no illusions on these points, but she said to herself:

"I will love him so much, that he will end by loving me."

Hence all her misfortunes. Her existence might have been tolerable, if she had not loved her husband so much; but she loved him too much. She had only succeeded in wearying him by her importunities and tenderness. He returned to his former life, which had been most irregular. Fifteen years had passed thus, in

a long martyrdom, supported by Madame de Lavardens with all the appearance of passive resignation. Nothing ever could distract her from, or cure her of, the love which was destroying her.

M. de Lavardens died in 1869; he left a son fourteen years of age, in whom were already visible all the defects and all the good qualities of his father. Without being seriously affected, the fortune of Madame de Lavardens was slightly compromised, slightly diminished. Madame de Lavardens sold her mansion in Paris, retired to the country, where she lived with strict economy, and devoted herself to the education of her son.

But here again grief and disappointment awaited her. Paul de Lavardens was intelligent, amiable, and affectionate, but thoroughly rebellious against any constraint, and any species of work. He drove to despair three or four tutors who vainly endeavored to force something serious into his head, went up to the military college of Saint-Cyr, failed at the examination, and began to devour in Paris, with all the haste and folly possible, 200,000 or 300,000 francs.

That done, he enlisted in the first regiment of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, had in the very beginning of his military career the good fortune to make one of an expeditionary column sent into the Sahara, distinguished himself, soon became quartermaster, and at the end of three years was about to be appointed sub-lieutenant, when he was captivated by a young person who played the *Fille de Madame Angot*, at the theatre in Algiers.

Paul had finished his time, he quitted the service,

and went to Paris with his charmer. . . . then it was a dancer. . . . then it was an actress. . . . then a circus-rider. He tried life in every form. He led the brilliant and miserable existence of the unoccupied.

But it was only three or four months that he passed in Paris each year. His mother made him an allowance of 30,000 francs, and had declared to him that never, while she lived, should he have another penny before his marriage. He knew his mother, he knew he must consider her words as serious. Thus, wishing to make a good figure in Paris, and lead a merry life, he spent his 30,000 francs in three months, and then docilely returned to Lavardens, where he was "out at grass." He spent his time hunting, fishing, and riding with the officers of the artillery regiment quartered at Souvigny. The little provincial milliners and *grisettes* replaced, without rendering him obvious of, the little singers and actresses of Paris. By searching for them, one may still find *grisettes* in country towns, and Paul de Lavardens sought assiduously.

As soon as the Curé had reached Madame de Lavardens, she said——

"Without waiting for Monsieur de Larnac, I can tell you the names of the purchasers of the domain of Longueval. I am quite easy on the subject, and have no doubt of the success of our plan. In order to avoid any foolish disputes, we have agreed among ourselves, that is, among our neighbors, Monsieur de Larnac, Monsieur Gallard, a great Parisian banker, and myself. Monsieur de Larnac will have La Mionne, Monsieur Gallard the castle and Blanche-Couronne, and I—La

Rozeraie. I know you, Monsieur le Curé, you will be anxious about your poor, but comfort yourself. These Gallards are rich and will give you plenty of money."

At this moment a cloud of dust appeared on the road, from it emerged a carriage.

"Here comes Monsieur de Larnac!" cried Paul, "I know his ponies!"

All three hurriedly descended from the terrace and returned to the castle. They arrived there just as M. de Larnac's carriage drove up to the entrance.

"Well?" asked Madame de Lavardens.

"Well!" replied M. de Larnac, "we have nothing."

"What? Nothing?" cried Madame de Lavardens, very pale and agitated.

"Nothing, nothing; absolutely nothing—the one or the other of us."

And M. de Larnac springing from his carriage, related what had taken place at the sale before the Tribunal of Souvigny.

"At first," he said, "everything went upon wheels. The castle went to Monsieur Gallard for 650,000 francs. No competitor—a raise of fifty francs had been sufficient. On the other hand, there was a little battle for Blanche-Couronne. The bids rose from 500,000 francs to 520,000 francs, and again Monsieur Gallard was victorious. Another and more animated battle for La Rozeraie; at last it was knocked down to you, Madame, for 455,000 francs. . . . I got the forest of La Mionne without opposition at a rise of 100 francs. All seemed over, those present had risen, our solicitors were surrounded with persons asking the names of the purchasers.

"Monsieur Brazier, the judge intrusted with the sale, desired silence, and the bailiff of the court offered the four lots together for 2,150,000 or 2,160,000 francs, I don't remember which. A murmur passed through the assembly. 'No one will bid' was heard on all sides. But little Gibert, the solicitor, who was seated in the first row, and till then had given no sign of life, rose and said calmly, 'I have a purchaser for the four lots together at 2,200,000 francs.' This was like a thunderbolt. A tremendous clamor arose, followed by a dead silence. The hall was filled with farmers and laborers from the neighborhood. Two million francs! So much money for the land threw them into a sort of respectful stupor. However, Monsieur Gallard, bending toward Sandrier, the solicitor who had bid for him, whispered something in his ear. The struggle began between Gibert and Sandrier. The bids rose to 2,500,000 francs. Monsieur Gallard hesitated for a moment—decided—continued up to 3,000,000. Then he stopped and the whole went to Gibert. Every one rushed on him, they surrounded —they crushed him: 'The name, the name of the purchaser?' 'It is an American,' replied Gibert, 'Mrs. Scott.'"

"Mrs. Scott!" cried Paul de Lavardens.

"You know her?" asked Madame de Lavardens.

"Do I know her?—do I—not at all. But I was at a ball at her house six weeks ago."

"At a ball at her house! and you don't know her! What sort of woman is she, then?"

"Charming, delightful, ideal, a miracle!"

"And is there a Mr. Scott?"

"It is an American," replied Gibert, "Mrs. Scott!"

[*From an Original Drawing by Madeleine Lemaire.*]

"Monsieur Br[illegible] with the sale, [illegible] the [illegible] francs. I don't remember [illegible] little Gibert, the [illegible] calmly, 'I have a [illegible] 2,200,000 francs.' This was like a th[illegible] mendous clamor arose, followed by a [illegible] ence. [illegible] neighborhood. Two million francs! So much money for the land threw them into a sort of respectful stupor. However [illegible] Gibert and [illegible] up to 3,000,000. Then [illegible] Scott."

[illegible]

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"At a ball at her house! and you don't know her! What sort of woman is she, then?"

"Charming, delightful, ideal, a miracle!"

"And is there a Mr. Scott?"

"Certainly, a tall, fair man. He was at his ball. They pointed him out to me. He bowed at random right and left. He was not much amused, I will answer for it. He looked at us as if he were thinking, 'Who are all these people? What are they doing at my house?' We went to see Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival, her sister. And certainly it was well worth the trouble."

"These Scotts," said Madame de Lavardens, addressing M. de Larnac, "do you know who they are?"

"Yes, Madame, I know. Mr. Scott is an American, possessing a colossal fortune, who settled himself in Paris last year. As soon as their name was mentioned, I understood that the victory had never been doubtful. Gallard was beaten beforehand. The Scotts began by buying a house in Paris for 2,000,000 francs, it is near the Parc Monceau."

"Yes, Rue Murillo," said Paul; "I tell you I went to a ball there. It was——"

"Let Monsieur de Larnac speak. You can tell us presently about the ball at Mrs. Scott's."

"Well, now, imagine my Americans established in Paris," continued M. de Larnac, "and the showers of gold begun. In the orthodox *parvenu* style they amuse themselves with throwing handfuls of gold out of window. Their great wealth is quite recent, they say; ten years ago Mrs. Scott begged in the streets of New York."

"Begged!"

"They say so. Then she married this Scott, the son of a New York banker, and all at once a successful lawsuit put into their hands not millions, but tens of mil-

lions. Somewhere in America they have a silver mine, but a genuine mine, a real mine—a mine with silver in it. Ah! we shall see what luxury will reign at Longueval! We shall all look like paupers beside them! It is said that they have 100,000 francs a day to spend."

"Such are our neighbors!" cried Madame de Lavardens. "An adventuress! and that is the least of it—a heretic, Monsieur l'Abbé, a Protestant!"

A heretic! a Protestant! Poor Curé; it was indeed that of which he had immediately thought on hearing the words, "An American, Mrs. Scott." The new chatelaine of Longueval would not go to mass. What did it matter to him that she had been a beggar? What did it matter to him if she possessed tens and tens of millions? She was not a Catholic. He would never again baptize children born at Longueval, and the chapel in the castle, where he had so often said mass, would be transformed into a Protestant oratory, which would echo only the frigid utterances of a Calvinistic or Lutheran pastor.

Every one was distressed, disappointed, overwhelmed; but in the midst of the general depression Paul stood radiant.

"A charming heretic at all events," said he, "or rather two charming heretics. You should see the two sisters on horseback in the Bois, with two little grooms behind them not higher than that."

"Come, Paul, tell us all you know. Describe the ball of which you speak. How did you happen to go to a ball at these Americans'?"

"By the greatest chance. My Aunt Valentine was at

home that night; I looked in about ten o'clock. Well, Aunt Valentine's Wednesdays are not exactly scenes of wild enjoyment, give you my word! I had been there about twenty minutes when I caught sight of Roger de Puymartin escaping furtively. I caught him in the hall and said:

"'We will go home together.'

"'Oh! I am not going home.'

"'Where are you going?'

"'To the ball.'

"'Where?'

"'At Mrs. Scott's. Will you come?'

"'But I have not been invited.'

"'Neither have I.'

"'What! not invited?'

"'No. I am going with one of my friends.'

"'And does your friend know them?'

"'Scarcely; but enough to introduce us. Come along; you will see Mrs. Scott.'

"'Oh! I have seen her on horseback in the Bois.'

"'But she does not wear a low gown on horseback; you have not seen her shoulders, and they are shoulders which ought to be seen. There is nothing better in Paris at this moment.'

"And I went to the ball, and I saw Mrs. Scott's red hair, and I saw Mrs. Scott's white shoulders, and I hope to see them again when there are balls at Longueval."

"Paul!" said Madame de Lavardens, pointing to the Abbé.

"Oh! Monsieur l'Abbé, I beg a thousand pardons. Have I said anything? It seems to me——"

The poor old priest had heard nothing; his thoughts were elsewhere. Already he saw, in the village streets, the Protestant pastor from the castle stopping before each house, and slipping under the doors little evangelical pamphlets.

Continuing his account, Paul launched into an enthusiastic description of the mansion, which was a marvel——

"Of bad taste and ostentation," interrupted Madame de Lavardens.

"Not at all, mother, not at all; nothing startling, nothing loud. It is admirably furnished, everything done with elegance and originality. An incomparable conservatory, flooded with electric light; the buffet was placed in the conservatory under a vine laden with grapes, which one could gather by handfuls, and in the month of April! The accessories of the cotillon cost, it appears, more than 40,000 francs. Ornaments, *bonbonnières*, delicious trifles, and we were begged to accept them. For my part I took nothing, but there were many who made no scruple. That evening Puymartin told me Mrs. Scott's history, but it was not at all like Monsieur de Larnac's story. Roger said that, when quite little, Mrs. Scott had been stolen from her family by some acrobats, and that her father had found her in a travelling circus, riding on barebacked horses and jumping through paper hoops."

"A circus-rider!" cried Madame de Lavardens, "I should have preferred the beggar."

"And while Roger was telling me this *Family Herald* romance, I saw approaching from the end of a gallery

a wonderful cloud of lace and satin; it surrounded this rider from a wandering circus, and I admired those shoulders, those dazzling shoulders, on which undulated a necklace of diamonds as big as the stopper of a decanter. They say that the Minister of Finance had sold secretly to Mrs. Scott half the crown diamonds, and that was how, the month before, he had been able to show a surplus of 1,500,000 francs in the budget. Add to all this that the lady had a remarkably good air, and that the little acrobat seemed perfectly at home in the midst of all this splendor."

Paul was going so far that his mother was obliged to stop him. Before M. de Larnac, who was excessively annoyed and disappointed, he showed too plainly his delight at the prospect of having this marvellous American for a near neighbor.

The Abbé Constantin was preparing to return to Longueval, but Paul, seeing him ready to start, said:

"No! no! Monsieur le Curé, you must not think of walking back to Longueval in the heat of the day. Allow me to drive you home. I am really grieved to see you so cast down, and will try my best to amuse you. Oh! if you were ten times a saint I would make you laugh at my stories."

And half an hour after, the two—the Curé and Paul—drove side by side in the direction of the village. Paul talked, talked, talked. His mother was not there to check or moderate his transports, and his joy was overflowing.

"Now, look here, Monsieur l'Abbé, you are wrong to take things in this tragic manner. Stay, look at my

little mare, how well she trots! what good action she has! You have not seen her before? What do you think I paid for her? Four hundred francs. I discovered her a fortnight ago, between the shafts of a market gardener's cart. She is a treasure. I assure you she can do sixteen miles an hour, and keep one's hands full all the time. Just see how she pulls. Come, tot—tot—tot! You are not in a hurry, Monsieur l'Abbé, I hope. Let us return through the wood; the fresh air will do you good. Oh! Monsieur l'Abbé, if you only knew what a regard I have for you, and respect, too. I did not talk too much nonsense before you just now, did I? I should be so sorry——"

"No, my child, I heard nothing."

"Well, we will take the longest way round."

After having turned to the left in the wood, Paul resumed his communications.

"I was saying, Monsieur l'Abbé," he went on, "that you are wrong to take things so seriously. Shall I tell you what I think? This is a very fortunate affair."

"Very fortunate?"

"Yes, very fortunate. I would rather see the Scotts at Longueval than the Gallards. Did you not hear Monsieur de Larnac reproach these Americans with spending their money foolishly. It is never foolish to spend money. The folly lies in keeping it. Your poor—for I am perfectly sure that it is your poor of whom you are thinking—your poor have made a good thing of it to-day. That is my opinion. The religion? Well, they will not go to mass, and that will be a grief to you, that is only natural; but they will send you money,

plenty of money, and you will take it, and you will be quite right in doing so. You will see that you will not say no. There will be gold raining over the whole place; a movement, a bustle, carriages with four horses, postilions, powdered footmen, paper chases, hunting parties, balls, fireworks, and here in this very spot I shall perhaps find Paris again before long. I shall see once more the two riders, and the two little grooms of whom I was speaking just now. If you only knew how well those two sisters look on horseback! One morning I went right round the Bois de Boulogne behind them; I fancy I can see them still. They had high hats, and little black veils drawn very tightly over their faces, and long riding-habits made in the princess form, with a single seam right down the back; and a woman must be awfully well made to wear a riding-habit like that, because you see, Monsieur l'Abbé, with a habit of that cut no deception is possible."

For some moments the Curé had not been listening to Paul's discourse. They had entered a long, perfectly straight avenue, and at the end of this avenue the Curé saw a horseman galloping along.

"Look," said the Curé to Paul, "your eyes are better than mine. Is not that Jean?"

"Yes, it is Jean. I know his gray mare."

Paul loved horses, and before looking at the rider looked at the horse. It was indeed Jean, who, when he saw in the distance the Curé and Paul de Lavardens, waved in the air his *képi* adorned with two golden stripes. Jean was lieutenant in the regiment of artillery quartered at Souvigny.

Some moments after he stopped by the little carriage, and, addressing the Curé, said:

"I have just been to your house, *mon parrain*. Pauline told me that you had gone to Souvigny about the sale. Well, who has bought the castle?"

"An American, Mrs. Scott."

"And Blanche-Couronne?"

"The same, Mrs. Scott."

"And La Rozeraie?"

"Mrs. Scott again."

"And the forest? Mrs. Scott again?"

"You have said it," replied Paul, "and I know Mrs. Scott, and I can promise you that there will be something going on at Longueval. I will introduce you. Only it is distressing to Monsieur l'Abbé because she is an American—a Protestant."

"Ah! that is true," said Jean, sympathizingly. "However, we will talk about it to-morrow. I am going to dine with you, godfather; I have warned Pauline of my visit; no time to stop to-day. I am on duty, and must be in quarters at three o'clock."

"Stables?" asked Paul.

"Yes. Good-by, Paul. To-morrow, godfather."

The lieutenant galloped away. Paul de Lavardens gave his little horse her head.

"What a capital fellow Jean is!" said Paul.

"Oh, yes, indeed!"

"There is no one on earth better than Jean."

"No, no one."

The Curé turned round to take another look at Jean, who was almost lost in the depths of the forest.

"Oh, yes, there is you, Monsieur le Curé."

"No, not me! not me!"

"Well, Monsieur l'Abbé, shall I tell you what I think? I think there is no one better than you two—you and Jean. That is the truth, if I must tell you. Oh! what a splendid place for a trot! I shall let Niniche go; I call her Niniche."

With the point of his whip Paul caressed the flank of Niniche, who started off at full speed, and Paul, delighted, cried:

"Just look at her action, Monsieur l'Abbé! Just look at her action! So regular—just like clockwork. Lean over and look."

To please Paul de Lavardens the Abbé Constantin did lean over and look at Niniche's action, but the old priest's thoughts were far away.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW CHATELAINE

HIS sub-lieutenant of artillery was called Jean Reynaud. He was the son of a country doctor who slept in the churchyard of Longueval.

In 1846, when the Abbé Constantin took possession of his little living, the grandfather of Jean was residing in a pleasant cottage on the road to Souvigny, between the picturesque old castles of Longueval and Lavardens.

Marcel, the son of that Dr. Reynaud, was finishing his medical studies in Paris. He possessed great industry, and an elevation of sentiment and mind extremely rare. He passed his examinations with great distinction, and had decided to fix his abode in Paris and tempt fortune there, and everything seemed to promise him the most prosperous and brilliant career, when, in 1852, he received the news of his father's death—he had been struck down by a fit of apoplexy. Marcel hurried to Longueval, overwhelmed with grief, for he adored his father. He spent a month with his mother, and then spoke of the necessity of returning to Paris.

"That is true," said his mother; "you must go."

"What! I must go! *We* must go, you mean. Do you think that I would leave you here alone? I shall take you with me."

"To live in Paris; to leave the place where I was born, where your father lived, where he died? I could never do it, my child, never! Go alone; your life, your future, are there. I know you; I know that you will never forget me, that you will come and see me often, very often."

"No, mother," he answered; "I shall stay here."

And he stayed.

His hopes, his ambitions, all in one moment vanished. He saw only one thing—duty—the duty of not abandoning his aged mother. In duty, simply accepted and simply discharged, he found happiness. After all, it is only thus that one does find happiness.

Marcel bowed with courage and good grace to his new existence. He continued his father's life, entering the groove at the very spot where he had left it. He devoted himself without regret to the obscure career of a country doctor. His father had left him a little land and a little money; he lived in the most simple manner possible, and one half of his life belonged to the poor, from whom he would never receive a penny.

This was his only luxury.

He found in his way a young girl, charming, penniless, and alone in the world. He married her. This was in 1855, and the following year brought to Dr. Reynaud a great sorrow and a great joy—the death of his old mother and the birth of his son Jean.

At an interval of six weeks, the Abbé Constantin re-

cited the prayers for the dead over the grave of the grandmother, and was present in the position of godfather at the baptism of the grandson.

In consequence of constantly meeting at the bedside of the suffering and dying, the priest and the doctor had been strongly attracted to each other. They instinctively felt that they belonged to the same family, the same race—the race of the tender, the just, and the benevolent.

Year followed year—calm, peaceful, fully occupied in labor and duty. Jean was no longer an infant. His father gave him his first lessons in reading and writing, the priest his first lessons in Latin. Jean was intelligent and industrious. He made so much progress that the two professors—particularly the Curé—found themselves at the end of a few years rather cast into the shade by their pupil. It was at this moment that the Countess, after the death of her husband, came to settle at Lavardens. She brought with her a tutor for her son Paul, a very nice, but very lazy little fellow. The two children were of the same age; they had known each other from their earliest years.

Madame de Lavardens had a great regard for Dr. Reynaud, and one day she made him the following proposal:

"Send Jean to me every morning," said she, "I will send him home in the evening. Paul's tutor is a very accomplished man; he will make the children work together. It will be rendering me a real service. Jean will set Paul a good example."

Things were thus arranged, and the little *bourgeois*

set the little nobleman a most excellent example of industry and application, but this excellent example was not followed.

The war broke out. On November 14th, at seven o'clock in the morning, the mobiles of Souvigny assembled in the great square of the town; their chaplain was the Abbé Constantin, their surgeon-major, Dr. Reynaud. The same idea had come at the same moment to both; the priest was sixty-two, the doctor fifty.

When they started, the battalion followed the road which led through Longueval, and which passed before the doctor's house. Madame Reynaud and Jean were waiting by the roadside. The child threw himself into his father's arms.

"Take me, too, papa! take me, too!"

Madame Reynaud wept. The doctor held them both in a long embrace, then he continued his way.

A hundred steps farther the road made a sharp curve. The doctor turned, cast one long look at his wife and child—the last; he was never to see them again.

On January 8, 1871, the mobiles of Souvigny attacked the village of Villersexel, occupied by the Prussians, who had barricaded themselves. The firing began. A mobile who marched in the front rank received a ball in the chest and fell. There was a short moment of trouble and hesitation.

"Forward! forward!" shouted the officers.

The men passed over the body of their comrade, and under a hail of bullets entered the town.

Dr. Reynaud and the Abbé Constantin marched with the troops; they stopped by the wounded man; the blood was rushing in floods from his mouth.

"There is nothing to be done," said the doctor. "He is dying; he belongs to you."

The priest knelt down by the dying man, and the doctor rose to go toward the village. He had not taken ten steps when he stopped, beat the air with both hands, and fell all at once to the ground. The priest ran to him; he was dead—killed on the spot by a bullet through the temples. That evening the village was ours, and the next day they placed in the cemetery of Villersexel the body of Dr. Reynaud.

Two months later the Abbé Constantin took back to Longueval the coffin of his friend, and behind the coffin, when it was carried from the church, walked an orphan. Jean had also lost his mother. At the news of her husband's death, Madame Reynaud had remained for twenty-four hours petrified, crushed, without a word or a tear; then fever had seized her, then delirium, and after a fortnight, death.

Jean was alone in the world; he was fourteen years old. Of that family, where for more than a century all had been good and honest, there remained only a child kneeling beside a grave; but he, too, promised to be what his father and grandfather before him had been—good, and honest, and true.

There are families like that in France, and many of them, more than one ventures to say. Our poor country is in many respects calumniated by certain novelists, who draw exaggerated and distorted pictures of it.

It is true the history of good people is often monotonous or painful. This story is a proof of it.

The grief of Jean was the grief of a man. He remained long sad and silent. The evening of his father's funeral the Abbé Constantin took him home to the vicarage. The day had been rainy and cold. Jean was sitting by the fireside; the priest was reading his breviary opposite him. Old Pauline came and went, arranging her affairs.

An hour passed without a word, when Jean, raising his head, said:

"Godfather, did my father leave me any money?"

This question was so extraordinary that the old priest, stupefied, could scarcely believe that he heard aright.

"You ask if your father——"

"I asked if my father left me some money?"

"Yes; he must have left you some."

"A good deal, don't you think? I have often heard people say that my father was rich. Tell me about how much he has left me!"

"But I don't know. You ask——"

The poor old man felt his heart rent in twain. Such a question at such a moment! Yet he thought he knew the boy's heart, and in that heart there should not be room for such thoughts.

"Pray, dear godfather, tell me," continued Jean, gently. "I will explain to you afterward why I ask that."

"Well, they say your father had 200,000 or 300,000 francs."

"And is that much?"

"Yes, it is a great deal."

"And it is all mine?"

"Yes, it is all yours."

"Oh! I am glad, because, you know, the day that my father was killed in the war, the Prussians killed, at the same time, the son of a poor woman in Longueval —old Clémence, you know; and they killed, too, the brother of Rosalie, with whom I used to play when I was quite little. Well, since I am rich and they are poor, I will divide with Clémence and Rosalie the money my father has left me."

On hearing these words the Curé rose, took Jean by both hands, and drew him into his arms. The white head rested on the fair one. Two large tears escaped from the eyes of the old priest, rolled slowly down his cheeks, and were lost in the furrows of his face.

However, the Curé was obliged to explain to Jean that, though he was his father's heir, he had not the right of disposing of his heritage as he would. There would be a family council, and a guardian would be appointed.

"You, no doubt, godfather?"

"No, not I, my child; a priest has not the right of exercising the functions of a guardian. They will, I think, choose Monsieur Lenient, the lawyer in Souvigny, who was one of your father's best friends. You can speak to him and tell him what you wish."

M. Lenient was eventually appointed guardian, and Jean urged his wishes so eagerly and touchingly that the lawyer consented to deduct from the income a sum of

2,400 francs, which, every year till Jean came of age, was divided between old Clémence and little Rosalie.

Under these circumstances, Madame de Lavardens was perfect. She went to the Abbé and said:

"Give Jean to me, give him to me entirely till he has finished his studies. I will bring him back to you every year during the holidays. It is not I who am rendering you a service; it is a service which I ask of you. I cannot imagine any greater good fortune for my son than to have Jean for a companion. I must resign myself to leaving Lavardens for a time. Paul is bent upon being a soldier and going up to Saint-Cyr. It is only in Paris that I can obtain the necessary masters. I will take the two children there; they will study together under my own eyes like brothers, and I will make no difference between them; of that you may be sure."

It was difficult to refuse such an offer. The old Curé would have dearly liked to keep Jean with him, and his heart was torn at the thought of this separation, but what was for the child's real interest? That was the only question to be considered; the rest was nothing. They summoned Jean.

"My child," said Madame de Lavardens to him, "will you come and live with Paul and me for some years? I will take you both to Paris."

"You are very kind, Madame, but I should have liked so much to stay here."

He looked at the Curé, who turned away his eyes.

"Why must we go?" he continued. "Why must you take Paul and me away?"

"Because it is only in Paris that you can have all the

advantages necessary to complete your studies. Paul will prepare for his examination at Saint-Cyr. You know he wishes to be a soldier."

"So do I, Madame. I wish to be one, too."

"You a soldier!" exclaimed the Curé; "but you know that was not at all your father's idea. In my presence, he has often spoken of your future, your career. You were to be a doctor, and, like him, doctor at Longueval, and, like him, devote yourself to the sick and poor. Jean, my child, do you remember?"

"I remember, I remember."

"Well, then, Jean, you must do as your father wished; it is your duty, Jean; it is your duty. You must go to Paris. You would like to stay here, I understand that well, and I should like it, too; but it can not be. You must go to Paris, and work, work hard. Not that I am anxious about that; you are your father's true son. You will be an honest and laborious man. One can not well be the one without the other. And some day, in your father's house, in the place where he has done so much good, the poor people of the country round will find another Doctor Reynaud, to whom they may look for help. And I—if by chance I am still in this world —when that day comes, I shall be so happy! But I am wrong to speak of myself; I ought not, I do not count. It is of your father that you must think. I repeat it, Jean, it was his dearest wish. You can not have forgotten it."

"No, I have not forgotten; but if my father sees me, and hears me, I am certain that he understands and forgives me, for it is on his account."

"On his account?"

"Yes. When I heard that he was dead, and when I heard how he died, all at once, without any need of reflection, I said to myself that I would be a soldier, and I will be a soldier! Godfather, and you, Madame, I beg you not to prevent me."

The child burst into tears—a perfect flood of passionate tears. The Countess and the Abbé soothed him with gentle words.

"Yes—yes—it is settled," they said; "anything that you wish, all that you wish."

Both had the same thought—leave it to time; Jean is only a child; he will change his mind.

In this, both were mistaken; Jean did not change his mind. In the month of September, 1876, Paul de Lavardens was rejected at Saint-Cyr, and Jean Reynaud passed eleventh at the *Ecole Polytechnique*. The day when the list of the candidates who had passed was published, he wrote to the Abbé Constantin:

"I have passed, and passed too well, for I wish to go into the army, and not the civil service; however, if I keep my place in the school, that will be the business of one of my comrades; he will have my chance."

It happened so in the end. Jean Reynaud did better than keep his place; the pass-list showed his name seventh, but instead of entering *l'Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées*, he entered the military college at Fontainebleau in 1878.

He was then just twenty-one; he was of age, master of his fortune, and the first act of the new administration was a great, a very great piece of extravagance.

He bought for old Clémence and little Rosalie two shares in Government stock of 1,500 francs each. That cost him 70,000 francs, almost the sum that Paul de Lavardens, in his first year of liberty in Paris, spent for Mademoiselle Lise Bruyère, of the Palais Royal Théatre.

Two years later Jean passed first at the examination, and left Fontainebleau with the right of choosing among the vacant places. There was one in the regiment quartered at Souvigny, and Souvigny was three miles from Longueval. Jean asked for this, and obtained it.

Thus Jean Reynaud, lieutenant in the ninth regiment of artillery, came in the month of October, 1880, to take possession of the house that had been his father's; thus he found himself once more in the place where his childhood had passed, and where every one had kept green the memory of the life and death of his father; thus the Abbé Constantin was not denied the happiness of once again having near him the son of his old friend, and, if the truth must be told, he no longer wished that Jean had become a doctor.

When the old Curé left his church after saying mass, when he saw coming along the road a great cloud of dust, when he felt the earth tremble under the rumbling cannon, he would stop, and, like a child, amuse himself with seeing the regiment pass, but to him the regiment was—Jean. It was this robust and manly cavalier, in whose face, as in an open book, one read uprightness, courage, and goodness.

The moment Jean perceived the Curé, he would put

his horse to a gallop, and go to have a little chat with his godfather. The horse would turn his head toward the Curé, for he knew very well there was always a piece of sugar for him in the pocket of that old black *soutane*—rusty and worn—the morning *soutane*. The Abbé Constantin had a beautiful new one, of which he took great care, to wear in society—when he went into society.

The trumpets of the regiment sounded as they passed through the village, and all eyes sought Jean—"little Jean"—for to the old people of Longueval he was still little Jean. Certain wrinkled, broken-down, old peasants had never been able to break themselves of the habit of saluting him when he passed with, "*Bonjour, gamin, ça va bien?*"

He was six feet high, this *gamin*, and Jean never crossed the village without perceiving at one window the old furrowed parchment skin of Clémence, and at another the smiling countenance of Rosalie. The latter had married during the previous year; Jean had given her away, and joyously on the wedding-night had he danced with the girls of Longueval.

Such was the lieutenant of artillery, who, on Saturday, May 28, 1881, at half-past four in the afternoon, sprang from his horse before the door of the vicarage of Longueval. He entered the gate, the horse obediently followed, and went by himself into a little shed in the yard. Pauline was at the kitchen window; Jean approached and kissed her heartily on both cheeks.

"Good-evening, Pauline. Is all well?"

"Very well. I am busy preparing your dinner;

would you like to know what you are going to have?—potato soup, a leg of mutton, and a custard."

"That is excellent; I shall enjoy everything, for I am dying of hunger."

"And a salad; I had forgotten it; you can help me cut it directly. Dinner will be at half-past six exactly, for at half-past seven Monsieur le Curé has his service for the month of Mary."

"Where is my godfather?"

"You will find him in the garden. He is very sad on account of this sale of yesterday."

"Yes, I know, I know."

"It will cheer him a little to see you; he is always so happy when you are here. Take care; Loulou is going to eat the climbing roses. How hot he is!"

"I came the long way by the wood, and rode very fast."

Jean captured Loulou, who was directing his steps toward the climbing roses. He unsaddled him, fastened him in the little shed, rubbed him down with a great handful of straw, after which he entered the house, relieved himself of his sword and *képi*, replaced the latter by an old straw hat, value sixpence, and then went to look for his godfather in the garden.

The poor Abbé was indeed sad; he had scarcely closed an eye all night—he who generally slept so easily, so quietly, the sound sleep of a child. His soul was wrung. Longueval in the hands of a foreigner, of a heretic, of an adventuress!

Jean repeated what Paul had said the evening before.

"You will have money, plenty of money, for your poor."

"Money! money! Yes, my poor will not lose, perhaps they will even gain by it; but I must go and ask for this money, and in the salon, instead of my old and dear friend, I shall find this red-haired American. It seems that she has red hair! I will certainly go for the sake of my poor—I will go—and she will give me the money, but she will give me nothing but money; the Marquise gave me something else—her life and her heart. Every week we went together to visit the sick and the poor; she knew all the sufferings and the miseries of the country round, and when the gout nailed me to my easy-chair she made the rounds alone, and as well, or better than I."

Pauline interrupted this conversation. She carried an immense earthenware salad-dish, on which bloomed, violent and startling, enormous red flowers.

"Here I am," said Pauline, "I am going to cut the salad. Jean, would you like lettuce or endive?"

"Endive," said Jean, gayly. "It is a long time since I have had any endive."

"Well, you shall have some to-night. Stay, take the dish."

Pauline began to cut the endive, and Jean bent down to receive the leaves in the great salad dish. The Curé looked on.

At this moment a sound of little bells was heard. A carriage was approaching; one heard the jangling and creaking of its wheels. The Curé's little garden was only separated from the road by a low hedge, in the middle of which was a little trellised gate.

All three looked out, and saw driving down the road a hired carriage of most primitive construction, drawn by two great white horses, and driven by an old coachman in a blouse. Beside this old coachman was seated a tall footman in livery, of the most severe and correct demeanor. In the carriage were two young women, dressed both alike in very elegant, but very simple, travelling costumes.

When the carriage was opposite the gate the coachman stopped his horses, and addressing the Abbé:

"Monsieur le Curé," said he, "these ladies wish to speak to you."

Then, turning toward the ladies:

"This is Monsieur le Curé of Longueval."

The Abbé Constantin approached and opened the little gate. The travellers alighted. Their looks rested, not without astonishment, on the young officer, who stood there, a little embarrassed, with his straw hat in one hand, and his salad dish, all overflowing with endive, in the other.

The visitors entered the garden, and the elder—she seemed about twenty-five—addressing the Abbé Constantin, said to him, with a little foreign accent, very original and very peculiar:

"I am obliged to introduce myself—Mrs. Scott; I am Mrs. Scott! It was I who bought the castle and farms and all the rest here at the sale yesterday. I hope that I do not disturb you, and that you can spare me five minutes." Then, pointing to her travelling companion, "Miss Bettina Percival, my sister; you guessed it, I am sure. We are very much alike, are we

not? Ah! Bettina, we have left our bags in the carriage, and we shall want them directly."

"I will get them."

And as Miss Percival prepared to go for the two little bags, Jean said to her:

"Pray allow me."

"I am really very sorry to give you so much trouble. The servant will give them to you; they are on the front seat."

She had the same accent as her sister, the same large eyes—black, laughing, and gay—and the same hair, not red, but fair, with golden shades, where daintily danced the light of the sun. She bowed to Jean with a pretty little smile, and he, having returned to Pauline the salad dish full of endive, went to look for the two little bags. Meanwhile—much agitated, sorely disturbed—the Abbé Constantin introduced into his vicarage the new Chatelaine of Longueval.

CHAPTER III

DELIGHTFUL SURPRISES

HIS vicarage of Longueval was far from being a palace. The same apartment on the ground floor served for dining and draiwng-room, communicating directly with the kitchen by a door, which stood always wide open. This room was furnished in the most scanty manner; two old armchairs, six straw chairs, a sideboard, a round table. Pauline had already laid the cloth for the dinner of the Abbé and Jean.

Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival went and came, examining the domestic arrangements of the Curé with a sort of childish wonder.

"But the garden, the house, everything is charming," said Mrs. Scott.

They both boldly penetrated into the kitchen; the Abbé Constantin followed them, scared, bewildered, stupefied at the suddenness and resolution of this American invasion.

Old Pauline, with an anxious and gloomy air, examined the two foreigners.

"There they are, then," she said to herself, "these Protestants, these accursed heretics!"

"I must compliment you," said Bettina; "it is so beautifully kept. Look, Susie, is not the vicarage altogether exactly what you wished?"

"And so is the Curé," rejoined Mrs. Scott. "Yes, Monsieur le Curé, if you will permit me to say so, you do not know how happy it makes me to find you just what you are. In the railway carriage what did I say to you, Bettina? And again just now, when we were driving here?"

"My sister said to me, Monsieur le Curé, that what she desired above everything was a priest, not young, or melancholy, or severe; but one with white hair and a kind and gentle manner. And that is exactly what you are, Monsieur le Curé, exactly. No, we could not have been more fortunate. Excuse me for speaking to you in this manner; the Parisians know how to make pretty phrases, but I do not, and in speaking French I should often be quite at a loss if I did not say everything in a simple and childish way, as it comes into my head. In a word, I am satisfied, quite satisfied, and I hope that you, too, Monsieur le Curé, will be as satisfied with your new parishioners."

"My parishioners!" exclaimed the Curé, all at once recovering speech, movement, life, everything which for some moments had completely abandoned him. "My parishioners! Pardon me, Madame, Mademoiselle, I am so agitated. You will be—you are Catholics?"

"Certainly we are Catholics."

"Catholics! Catholics!" repeated the Curé.

"Catholics! Catholics!" echoed old Pauline.

Mrs. Scott looked from the Curé to Pauline, from Pauline to the Curé, much surprised that a single word should produce such an effect, and, to complete the tableau, Jean appeared carrying the two little travelling bags.

The Curé and Pauline saluted him with the same words:

"Catholics! Catholics!"

"Ah! I begin to understand," said Mrs. Scott, laughing. "It is our name, our country; you must have thought that we were Protestants. Not at all. Our mother was a Canadian, French and Catholic by descent; that is why my sister and I both speak French, with an accent, it is true, and with certain American idioms, but yet in such a manner as to be able to express nearly all we want to say. My husband is a Protestant, but he allows me complete liberty, and my two children are Catholics. That is why, Monsieur l'Abbé, we wished to come and see you the very first day."

"That is one reason," continued Bettina, "but there is also another; but for that reason we shall want our little bags."

"Here they are," said Jean.

While the two little bags passed from the hands of the officer to those of Mrs. Scott and Bettina, the Curé introduced Jean to the two Americans, but his agitation was so great that the introduction was not made strictly according to rule. The Curé only forgot one thing, it is true, but that was a thing tolerably essential in an introduction—the family name of Jean.

"It is Jean," said he, "my godson, lieutenant of ar-

tillery, now quartered at Souvigny. He is one of the family."

Jean made two deep bows, the Americans two little ones, after which they foraged in their bags, from which each drew a *rouleau* of 1,000 francs, daintily inclosed in green sheaths of serpent-skin, clasped with gold.

"I have brought you this for your poor," said Mrs. Scott.

"And I have brought this," said Bettina.

"And besides that, Monsieur le Curé, I am going to give you five hundred francs a month," said Mrs. Scott.

"And I will do like my sister."

Delicately they slipped their offerings into the right and left hands of the Curé, who, looking at each hand alternately, said:

"What are these little things? They are very heavy; there must be money in them. Yes, but how much, how much?"

The Abbé Constantin was seventy-two, and much money had passed through his hands, but this money had come to him in small sums, and the idea of such an offering as this had never entered his head. Two thousand francs! Never had he had so much in his possession—no, not even one thousand. He stammered:

"I am very grateful to you, Madame; you are very good, Mademoiselle——"

But after all he could not thank them enough, and Jean thought it necessary to come to his assistance.

"They have given you two thousand francs!"

And then, full of warmest gratitude, the Curé cried:

"Two thousand francs! Two thousand francs for my poor!"

Pauline suddenly reappeared.

"Here, Pauline," said the Curé, "put away this money, and take care——"

Old Pauline filled many positions in this simple household — cook, maid-of-all-work, treasurer, dispenser. Her hands received with a respectful tremble these two little *rouleaux* which represented so much misery alleviated, so much suffering relieved.

"One thousand francs a month! But there will be no poor left in the country."

"That is just what I wish. I am rich, very rich, and so is my sister; she is even richer than I am, because a young girl has not so many expenses, while I— Ah! well, I spend all that I can—all that I can. When one has a great deal of money, too much, more than one feels to be just, tell me, Monsieur le Curé, is there any other way of obtaining pardon than to keep one's hands open, and give, give, give, all one can, and as usefully as one can? Besides, you can give me something in return;" and, turning to Pauline, "Will you be so kind as to give me a glass of water? No, nothing else; a glass of cold water; I am dying of thirst."

"And I," said Bettina, laughing, while Pauline ran to fetch the water, "I am dying of something else—of hunger, to tell the truth. Monsieur le Curé—I know that I am going to be dreadfully intrusive; I see your cloth is laid—could you not invite us to dinner?"

"Bettina!" said Mrs. Scott.

"Let me alone, Susie, let me alone. Won't you, Monsieur le Curé? I am sure you will."

But he could find no reply. The old Curé hardly knew where he was. They had taken his vicarage by storm; they were Catholics; they had promised him one thousand francs a month, and now they wanted to dine with him. Ah! that was the last stroke. Terror seized him at the thought of having to do the honors of his leg of mutton and his custard to these two absurdly rich Americans. He murmured:

"Dine!—you would like to dine here?"

Jean thought he must interpose again. "It would be a great pleasure to my godfather," said he, "if you would kindly stay. But I know what disturbs him. We were going to dine together, just the two of us, and you must not expect a feast. You will be very indulgent?"

"Yes, yes, very indulgent," replied Bettina; then, addressing her sister, "Come, Susie, you must not be cross, because I have been a little—you know it is my way to be a little— Let us stay, will you? It will do us good to pass a quiet hour here, after such a day as we have had! On the railway, in the carriage, in the heat, in the dust; we had such a horrid luncheon, in such a horrid hotel. We were to have returned to the same hotel at seven o'clock to dine, and then take the train back to Paris, but dinner here will be really much nicer. You won't say no? Ah! how good you are, Susie!"

She embraced her sister fondly; then turning toward the Curé:

"If you only knew, Monsieur le Curé, how good she is!"

"Bettina! Bettina!"

"Come," said Jean, "quick, Pauline, two more plates; I will help you."

"And so will I," said Bettina, "I will help, too. Oh! do let me; it will be so amusing. Monsieur le Curé, you will let me do a little as if I were at home?"

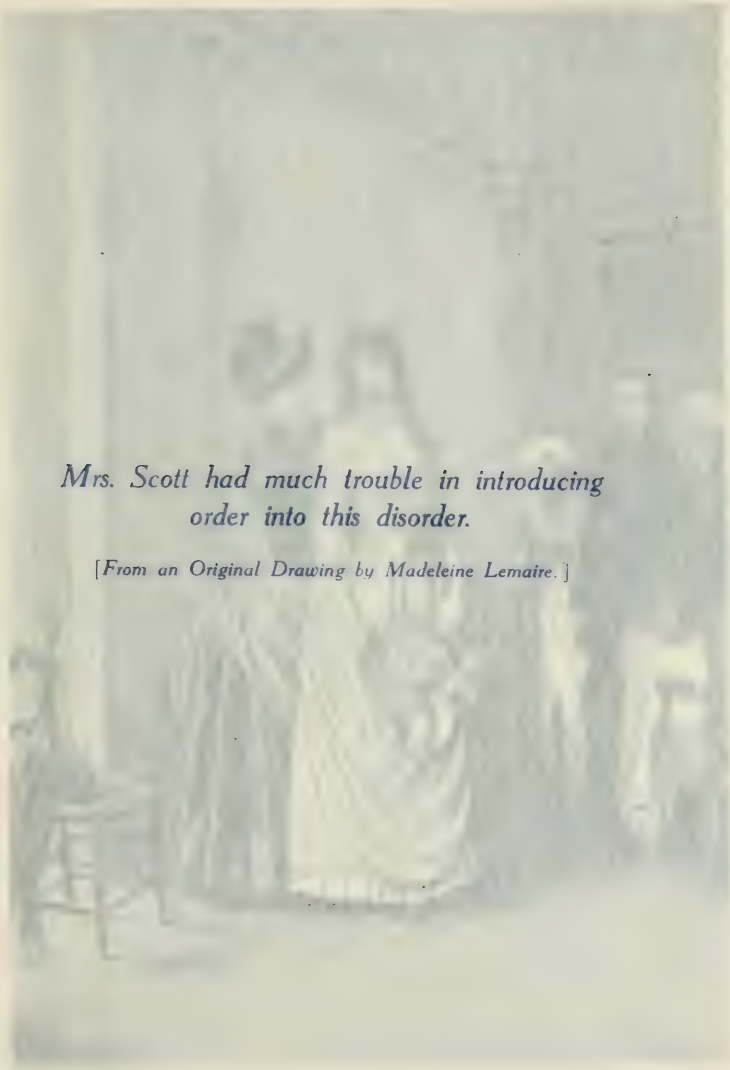
In a moment she had taken off her mantle, and Jean could admire, in all its exquisite perfection, a figure marvellous for suppleness and grace. Miss Percival then removed her hat, but with a little too much haste, for this was the signal for a charming catastrophe. A whole avalanche descended in torrents, in long cascades, over Bettina's shoulders. She was standing before a window flooded by the rays of the sun, and this golden light, falling full on this golden hair, formed a delicious frame for the sparkling beauty of the young girl. Confused and blushing, Bettina was obliged to call her sister to her aid, and Mrs. Scott had much trouble in introducing order into this disorder.

When this disaster was at length repaired, nothing could prevent Bettina from rushing on plates, knives, and forks.

"Oh, indeed," said she to Jean, "I know very well how to lay the cloth. Ask my sister. Tell him, Susie, when I was a little girl in New York, I used to lay the cloth very well, didn't I?"

"Very well, indeed," said Mrs. Scott.

And then, while begging the Curé to excuse Bettina's want of thought, she, too, took off her hat and



Mrs. Scott had much trouble in introducing order into this disorder.

[*From an Original Drawing by Madeleine Lemaire.*]

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[illegible]

[illegible]," said Jean, "quick [illegible] two more [illegible]

[illegible] do let me; it will be so amusing. [illegible] le Curé, you will let me do a little as if I [illegible]

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[illegible]

"Oh, indeed," said she to Jean, "I know very well [illegible]h. Ask my sister. Tell him, Susie, [illegible]

"Very well, indeed," said Mrs. Scott.

And then, while begging the Curé to excuse Bettina's want of thought, she, too, took off her hat and

mantle, so that Jean had again the very agreeable spectacle of a charming figure and beautiful hair; but, to Jean's great regret, the catastrophe had not a second representation.

In a few minutes Mrs. Scott, Miss Percival, the Curé, and Jean were seated round the little vicarage table; then, thanks partly to the impromptu and original nature of the entertainment, partly to the good-humor and perhaps slightly audacious gayety of Bettina, the conversation took a turn of the frankest and most cordial familiarity.

"Now, Monsieur le Curé," said Bettina, "you shall see if I did not speak the truth when I said I was dying of hunger. I never was so glad to sit down to dinner. This is such a delightful finish to our day. Both my sister and I are perfectly happy now we have this castle, and these farms, and the forest."

"And then," said Mrs. Scott, "to have all that in such an extraordinary and unexpected manner. We were so taken by surprise."

"You may indeed say so, Susie. You must know, Monsieur l'Abbé, that yesterday was my sister's birthday. But first, pardon me, Monsieur—Jean, is it not?"

"Yes, Miss Percival, Monsieur Jean."

"Well, Monsieur Jean, a little more of that excellent soup, if you please."

The Abbé was beginning to recover a little, but he was still too agitated to perform the duties of a host. It was Jean who had undertaken the management of his godfather's little dinner. He filled the plate of the charming American, who fixed upon him the glance of

two large eyes, in which sparkled frankness, daring, and gayety. The eyes of Jean, meanwhile, repaid Miss Percival in the same coin. It was scarcely three quarters of an hour since the young American and the young officer had made acquaintance in the Curé's garden, yet both felt already perfectly at ease with each other, full of confidence, almost like old friends.

"I told you, Monsieur l'Abbé," continued Bettina, "that yesterday was my sister's birthday. A week ago my brother-in-law was obliged to return to America, but at starting he said to my sister, 'I shall not be with you on your birthday, but you will hear from me.' So, yesterday, presents and bouquets arrived from all quarters, but from my brother-in-law, up to five o'clock, nothing—nothing. We were just starting for a ride in the Bois, and *à propos* of riding"—she stopped, and looking curiously at Jean's great dusty boots—"Monsieur Jean, you have spurs on."

"Yes, Miss Percival."

"Then you are in the cavalry?"

"I am in the artillery, and that, you know, is cavalry."

"And your regiment is quartered?"——

"Quite near here."

"Then you will be able to ride with us?"

"With the greatest pleasure."

"That is settled. Let me see; where was I?"

"You do not know at all where you are, Bettina, and you are telling these gentlemen things which can not interest them."

"Oh! I beg your pardon," said the Curé. "The sale of this estate is the only subject of conversation in

the neighborhood just now, and Miss Percival's account interests me very much."

"You see, Susie, my account interests Monsieur le Curé very much; then I shall continue. We went for our ride, we returned at seven o'clock—nothing. We dined, and just when we were leaving the table a telegram from America arrived. It contained only a few lines:

"'I have ordered the purchase to-day, for you and in your name, of the castle and lands of Longueval, near Souvigny, on the Northern Railway line.'

"Then we both burst into a fit of wild laughter at the thought."

"No, no, Bettina; you calumniate us both. Our first thought was one of very sincere gratitude, for both my sister and I are very fond of the country. My husband knows that we had longed to have an estate in France. For six months he had been looking out, and found nothing. At last he discovered this one, and, without telling us, ordered it to be bought for my birthday. It was a delicate attention."

"Yes, Susie, you are right, but after the little fit of gratitude, we had a great one of gayety."

"Yes, I confess it. When we realized that we had suddenly become possessed of a castle, without knowing in the least where it was, what it was like, or how much it had cost, it seemed so like a fairy-tale. Well, for five good minutes we laughed with all our hearts, then we seized the map of France, and succeeded in discovering Souvigny. When he had finished with the map it was the turn of the railway guide, and this morning, by the ten o'clock express, we arrived at Souvigny.

"We have passed the whole day in visiting the castle, the farms, the woods, the stables. We are delighted with what we have seen. Only, Monsieur le Curé, there is one thing about which I feel curious. I know that the place was sold yesterday; but I have not dared to ask either agent or farmer who accompanied me in my walk—for my ignorance would have seemed too absurd—I have not dared to ask how much it cost. In the telegram my husband does not mention the sum. Since I am so delighted with the place, the price is only a detail, but still I should like to know it. Tell me, Monsieur le Curé, do you know what it cost?"

"An enormous price," replied the Curé, "for many hopes and many ambitions were excited about Longueval."

"An enormous price! You frighten me. How much exactly?"

"Three millions!"

"Is that all? Is that all?" cried Mrs. Scott. "The castle, the farms, the forest, all for three millions?"

"But that is nothing," said Bettina. "That delicious little stream which wanders through the park is alone worth three millions."

"And you said just now, Monsieur le Curé, that there were several persons who disputed the purchase with us?"

"Yes, Mrs. Scott."

"And, after the sale, was my name mentioned among these persons?"

"Certainly it was."

"And when my name was mentioned was there no

one there who spoke of me? Yes, yes, your silence is a sufficient answer; they did speak of me. Well, Monsieur le Curé, I am now serious, very serious. I beg you as a favor to tell me what was said."

"But," replied the poor Curé, who felt himself upon burning coals, "they spoke of your large fortune."

"Yes, of course, they would be obliged to speak of that, and no doubt they said that I was very rich, but had not been rich long—that I was a *parvenu.* Very well, but that is not all; they must have said something else."

"No, indeed; I have heard nothing else."

"Oh, Monsieur le Curé, that is what you may can a white lie, and it is making you very unhappy, because naturally you are the soul of truth; but if I torment you thus it is because I have the greatest interest in knowing what was said."

"You are right," interrupted Jean, "you are right. They said you were one of the most elegant, the most brilliant, and the——"

"And one of the prettiest women in Paris. With a little indulgence they might say that; but that is not all yet—there is something else."

"Oh! I assure you——"

"Yes, there is something else, and I should like to hear it this very moment, and I should like the information to be very frank and very exact. It seems to me that I am in a lucky vein to-day, and I feel as if you were both a little inclined to be my friends, and that you will be so entirely some day. Well, tell me if I am right in supposing that should false and absurd

stories be told about me you will help me to contradict them."

"Yes!" replied Jean, "you are right in believing that."

"Well, then, it is to you that I address myself. You are a soldier, and courage is part of your profession. Promise me to be brave. Will you promise me?"

"What do you understand by being brave?"

"Promise, promise—without explanations, without conditions."

"Well, I promise."

"You will then reply frankly, 'Yes' or 'No,' to questions?"

"I will."

"Did they say that I had begged in the streets of New York?"

"Yes, they said so."

"Did they say I had been a rider in a travelling circus?"

"Yes; they said that, too."

"Very well; that is plain speaking. Now remark first that in all this there is nothing that one might not acknowledge if it were true; but it is not true, and have I not the right of denying it? My history—I will tell it you in a few words. I am going to pass a part of my life in this place, and I desire that all should know who I am and whence I come. To begin, then. Poor! Yes, I have been, and very poor. Eight years ago my father died, and was soon followed by my mother. I was then eighteen, and Bettina nine. We were alone in the world, encumbered with heavy debts and a great lawsuit. My father's last words had been, 'Susie,

never, never compromise. Millions, my children, you will have millions.' He embraced us both; soon delirium seized him, and he died repeating, 'Millions; millions!' The next morning a lawyer appeared, who offered to pay all our debts, and to give us besides ten thousand dollars, if we would give up all our claims. I refused. It was then that for several months we were very poor."

"And it was then," said Bettina, "that I used to lay the cloth."

"I spent my life among the solicitors of New York, but no one would take up my case; everywhere I received the same reply: 'Your cause is very doubtful; you have rich and formidable adversaries; you need money, large sums of money, to bring such a case to a conclusion, and you have nothing. They offer to pay your debts, and to give you ten thousand dollars besides. Accept it, and sell your case.' But my father's last words rang in my ears, and I would not. Poverty, however, might soon have forced me to, when one day I made another attempt on one of my father's old friends, a banker in New York, Mr. William Scott. He was not alone; a young man was sitting in his office.

"'You may speak freely,' said Mr. Scott; 'it is my son Richard.'

"I looked at the young man, he looked at me, and we recognized each other.

"'Susie!'

"'Richard!"

"Formerly, as children, we had often played together and were great friends. Seven or eight years

before this meeting he had been sent to Europe to finish his education. We shook hands; his father made me sit down, and asked what had brought me. He listened to my tale; and replied:

"'You would require twenty or thirty thousand dollars. No one would lend you such a sum upon the uncertain chances of a very complicated lawsuit. If you are in difficulties; if you need assistance——'

"'It is not that, father. That is not what Miss Percival asks.'

"'I know that very well, but what she asks is impossible.'

"He rose to let me out. Then the sense of my helplessness overpowered me for the first time since my father's death. I burst into a violent flood of tears. An hour later Richard Scott was with me.

"'Susie,' he said, 'promise to accept what I am going to offer.'

"I promised him.

"'Well,' said he, 'on the single condition that my father shall know nothing about it, I place at your disposal the necessary sum.'

"'But then you ought to know what the lawsuit is—what it is worth.'

"'I do not know a single word about it, and I do not wish to. Besides, you have promised to accept it; you can not withdraw now.'

"I accepted. Three months after the case was ours. All this vast property became beyond dispute the property of Bettina and me. The other side offered to buy it of us for five million dollars. I consulted Richard.

"'Refuse it and wait,' said he; 'if they offer you such a sum it is because the property is worth double.'

"'However, I must return you your money; I owe you a great deal.'

"'Oh! as for that there is no hurry; I am very easy about it; my money is quite safe now.'

"'But I should like to pay you at once. I have a horror of debt! Perhaps there is another way without selling the property. Richard, will you be my husband?'

"Yes, Monsieur le Curé, yes," said Mrs. Scott, laughing, "it is thus that I threw myself at my husband's head. It is I who asked his hand. But really I was obliged to act thus. Never, never, would he have spoken; I had become too rich, and as it was me he loved, and not my money, he was becoming terribly afraid of me. That is the history of my marriage. As to the history of my fortune, it can be told in a few words. There were indeed millions in those wide lands of Colorado; they discovered there abundant mines of silver, and from those mines we draw every year an income which is beyond reason, but we have agreed—my husband, my sister, and myself—to give a very large share of this income to the poor. You see, Monsieur le Curé, it is because we have known very hard times that you will always find us ready to help those who are, as we have been ourselves, involved in the difficulties and sorrows of life. And now, Monsieur Jean, will you forgive me this long discourse, and offer me a little of that cream, which looks so very good?"

This cream was Pauline's custard, and while Jean was serving Mrs. Scott——

"I have not yet finished," she continued. "You ought to know what gave rise to these extravagant stories. A year ago, when we settled in Paris, we considered it our duty on our arrival to give a certain sum to the poor. Who was it spoke of that? None of us, certainly, but the thing was told in a newspaper, with the amount. Immediately two young reporters hastened to subject Mr. Scott to a little examination on his past history; they wished to give a sketch of our career in the—what do you call them?—society papers. Mr. Scott is sometimes a little hasty; he was so on this occasion, and dismissed these gentlemen rather brusquely, without telling them anything. So, as they did not know our real history, they invented one, and certainly displayed a very lively imagination. First they related how I had begged in the snow in New York; the next day appeared a still more sensational article, which made me a rider in a circus in Philadelphia. You have some very funny papers in France; so have we in America, for the matter of that."

During the last five minutes, Pauline had been making desperate signs to the Curé, who persisted in not understanding them, till at last the poor woman, calling up all her courage, said:

"Monsieur le Curé, it is a quarter past seven."

"A quarter past seven! Ladies, I must beg you to excuse me. This evening I have the special service for the month of Mary."

"The month of Mary? And will the service begin directly?"

"Yes, directly."

"And when does our train start for Paris?"

"At half past nine," replied Jean.

"Susie, can we not go to church first?"

"Yes, we will go," replied Mrs. Scott; "but before we separate, Monsieur le Curé, I have one favor to ask you. I should like very much, the first time I dine at Longueval, that you would dine with me, and you, too, Monsieur Jean, just us four alone like to-day. Oh! do not refuse my invitation; it is given with all my heart."

"And accepted as heartily," replied Jean.

"I will write and tell you the day, and it shall be as soon as possible. You call that having a house-warming, don't you? Well, we shall have the house-warming all to ourselves."

Meanwhile, Pauline had drawn Miss Percival into a corner of the room, and was talking to her with great animation. The conversation ended with these words:

"You will be there?" said Bettina, "and you will tell me the exact moment?"

"I will tell you, but take care. Here is Monsieur le Curé; he must not suspect anything."

The two sisters, the Curé, and Jean left the house. To go to the church they were obliged to cross the churchyard. The evening was delicious. Slowly, silently, under the rays of the setting sun, the four walked down a long avenue.

On their way was the monument to Dr. Reynaud, very simple, but which, by its fine proportions, showed distinctly among the other tombs.

Mrs. Scott and Bettina stopped, struck with this inscription carved on the stone:

"Here lies Dr. Marcel Reynaud, Surgeon-Major of the Souvigny Mobiles; killed January 8, 1871, at the Battle of Villersexel. Pray for him."

When they had read it, the Curé, pointing to Jean, said:

"It was his father!"

The two sisters drew near the tomb, and with bent heads remained there for some minutes, pensive, touched, contemplative. Then both turned, and at the same moment, by the same impulse, offered their hands to Jean; then continued their walk to the church. Their first prayer at Longueval had been for the father of Jean.

The Curé went to put on his surplice and stole. Jean conducted Mrs. Scott to the seat which belonged to the masters of Longueval.

Pauline had gone on before. She was waiting for Miss Percival in the shadow behind one of the pillars. By a steep and narrow staircase, she led Bettina to the gallery, and placed her before the harmonium.

Preceded by two little chorister boys, the old Curé left the vestry, and at the moment when he knelt on the steps of the alter——

"Now! Mademoiselle," said Pauline, whose heart beat with impatience. "Poor, dear man, how pleased he will be."

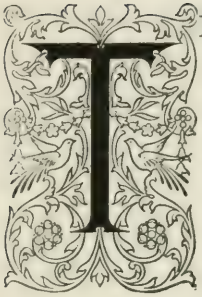
When he heard the sound of the music rise, soft as a murmur, and spread through the little church, the Abbé Constantin was filled with such emotion, such joy, that the tears came to his eyes. He could not remember having wept since the day when Jean had said that he

wished to share all that he possessed with the mother and sister of those who had fallen by his father's side under the Prussian bullets.

To bring tears to the eyes of the old priest, a little American had been brought across the seas to play a reverie of Chopin in the little church of Longueval.

CHAPTER IV

A RIOT OF CHARITY



THE next day, at half-past five in the morning, the bugle-call rang through the barrack-yard at Souvigny. Jean mounted his horse, and took his place with his division. By the end of May all the recruits in the army are sufficiently instructed to be capable of sharing in the general evolutions. Almost every day manœuvres of the mounted artillery are executed on the parade-ground. Jean loved his profession; he was in the habit of inspecting carefully the grooming and harness of the horses, the equipment and carriage of his men. This morning, however, he bestowed but scant attention on all the little details of his duty.

One problem agitated, tormented him, and left him always undecided, and this problem was one of those the solution of which is not given at the *Ecole Polytechnique*. Jean could find no convincing reply to this question: Which of the two sisters is the prettier?

At the butts, during the first part of the manœuvre, each battery worked on its own account, under the orders of the captain; but he often relinquished the place to one of his lieutenants, in order to accustom them to

the management of six field-pieces. It happened on this day that the command was intrusted to the hands of Jean. To the great surprise of the Captain, in whose estimation his Lieutenant held the first rank as a well-trained, smart, and capable officer, everything went wrong. The Captain was obliged to interfere; he addressed a little reprimand to Jean, which terminated in these words:

"I can not understand it at all. What is the matter with you this morning? It is the first time such a thing has happened with you."

It was also the first time that Jean had seen anything at the butts at Souvigny but cannon, ammunition wagons, horses, or gunners.

In the clouds of dust raised by the wheels of the wagons and the hoofs of the horses Jean beheld, not the second mounted battery of the 9th Regiment of artillery, but the distinct images of two Americans with black eyes and golden hair; and, at the moment when he listened respectfully to the well-merited lecture from his Captain, he was in the act of saying to himself:

"The prettier is Mrs. Scott!"

Every morning the exercise is divided into two parts by a little interval of ten minutes. The officers gathered together and talked; Jean remained apart, alone with his recollections of the previous evening. His thoughts obstinately gathered round the vicarage of Longueval.

"Yes! the more charming of the two sisters is Mrs. Scott; Miss Percival is only a child."

He saw again Mrs. Scott at the Curé's little table. He heard her story told with such frankness, such free-

dom. The harmony of that very peculiar, very fascinating voice, still enchanted his ear. He was again in the church; she was there before him, bending over her *prie-Dieu*, her pretty head resting in her two little hands; then the music arose, and far off, in the dusk, Jean perceived the fine and delicate profile of Bettina.

"A child—is she only a child?"

The trumpets sounded, the practice was resumed; this time, fortunately, no command, no responsibility. The four batteries executed their evolutions together; this immense mass of men, horses, and carriages, deployed in every direction, now drawn out in a long line, again collected into a compact group. All stopped at the same instant along the whole extent of the ground; the gunners sprang from their horses, ran to their pieces, detached each from its team, which went off at a trot and prepared to fire with amazing rapidity. Then the horses returned, the men re-attached their pieces; sprang quickly to saddle, and the regiment started at full gallop across the field.

Very gently in the thoughts of Jean Bettina regained her advantage over Mrs. Scott. She appeared to him smiling and blushing amid the sunlit clouds of her floating hair. Monsieur Jean, she had called him, Monsieur Jean, and never had his name sounded so sweet. And that last pressure of the hand on taking leave, before entering the carriage. Had not Miss Percival given him a more cordial clasp than Mrs. Scott had done? Yes, positively a little more.

"I was mistaken," thought Jean; "the prettier is Miss Percival."

The day's work was finished; the pieces were ranged regularly in line one behind the other; they defiled rapidly, with a horrible clatter, and in a cloud of dust. When Jean, sword in hand, passed before his Colonel, the images of the two sisters were so confused and intermingled in his recollection that they melted the one in the other, and became in some measure the image of one and the same person. Any parallel became impossible between them, thanks to this singular confusion of the two points of comparison. Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival remained thus inseparable in the thoughts of Jean until the day when it was granted to him to see them again. The impression of that meeting was not effaced; it was always there, persistent, and very sweet, till Jean began to feel disturbed.

"Is it possible"—so ran his meditations—"is it possible that I have been guilty of the folly of falling in love madly at first sight? No; one might fall in love with a woman, but not with two women at once."

That thought reassured him. He was very young, this great fellow of four-and-twenty; never had love entered fully into his heart. Love! He knew very little about it, except from books, and he had read but few of them. But he was no angel; he could find plenty of attractions in the *grisettes* of Souvigny, and when they would allow him to tell them that they were charming, he was quite ready to do so, but it had never entered his head to regard as love those passing fancies, which only caused the slightest and most superficial disturbance in his heart.

Paul de Lavardens had marvellous powers of en-

thusiasm and idealization. His heart sheltered always two or three *grandes passions*, which lived there in perfect harmony. Paul had been so clever as to discover, in this little town of 15,000 souls, numbers of pretty girls, all made to be adored. He always believed himself the discoverer of America, when, in fact, he had done nothing but follow in the track of other navigators.

The world—Jean had scarcely encountered it. He had allowed himself to be dragged by Paul, a dozen times, perhaps, to *soirées* or balls at the great houses of the neighborhood. He had invariably returned thoroughly bored, and had concluded that these pleasures were not made for him. His tastes were simple, serious. He loved solitude, work, long walks, open space, horses, and books. He was rather savage—a son of the soil. He loved his village, and all the old friends of his childhood. A quadrille in a drawing-room caused him unspeakable terror; but every year, at the festival of the patron saint of Longueval, he danced gayly with the young girls and farmers' daughters of the neighborhood.

If he had seen Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival at home in Paris, in all the splendor of their luxury, in all the perfection of their costly surroundings, he would have looked at them from afar, with curiosity, as exquisite works of art. Then he would have returned home, and would have slept, as usual, the most peaceful slumber in the world.

Yes, but it was not thus that the thing had come to pass, and hence his excitement, hence his disturbance. These two women had shown themselves before him in the midst of a circle with which he was familiar, and

which had been, if only for this reason, singularly favorable to them. Simple, good, frank, cordial, such they had shown themselves the very first day, and delightfully pretty into the bargain—a fact which is never insignificant. Jean fell at once under the charm; he was there still!

At the moment when he dismounted in the barrack-yard, at nine o'clock, the old priest began his campaign joyously. Since the previous evening the Abbé's head had been on fire; Jean had not slept much, but he had not slept at all. He had risen very early, and with closed doors, alone with Pauline, he had counted and recounted his money, spreading out his one hundred louis-d'or, gloating over them like a miser, and like a miser finding exquisite pleasure in handling his hoard. All that was his! for him! that is to say, for the poor.

"Do not be too lavish, Monsieur le Curé," said Pauline; "be economical. I think that if you distribute to-day one hundred francs——"

"That is not enough, Pauline. I shall only have one such day in my life, but one I will have. How much do you think I shall give to-day?"

"How much, Monsieur le Curé?"

"One thousand francs!"

"One thousand francs!"

"Yes. We are millionaires now; we possess all the treasures of America, and you talk about economy? Not to-day, at all events; indeed, I have no right to think of it."

After saying mass at nine o'clock he set out and showered gold along his way. All had a share—the poor who

acknowledged their poverty and those who concealed it. Each alms was accompanied by the same little discourse:

"This comes from the new owners of the Longueval —two American ladies, Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival. Remember their names, and pray for them."

Then he made off without waiting for thanks, across the fields, through the woods, from hamlet to hamlet, from cottage to cottage—on, on, on. A sort of intoxication mounted to his brain. Everywhere were cries of joy and astonishment. All these louis-d'or fell, as if by a miracle, into the poor hands accustomed to receive little pieces of silver. The Curé was guilty of follies, actual follies. He was out of bounds; he did not recognize himself; he had lost all control over himself; he even gave to those who did not expect anything.

He met Claude Rigal, the old sergeant, who had left one of his arms at Sebastopol. He was growing gray —nay, white; for time passes, and the soldiers of the Crimea will soon be old men.

"Here!" said the Curé, "I have twenty francs for you."

"Twenty francs? But I never asked for anything; I don't want anything; I have my pension."

His pension! Seven hundred francs!

"But listen; it will be something to buy you cigars. It comes from America."

And then followed the Abbé's little speech about the masters of Longueval.

He went to a poor woman whose son had gone to Tunis.

"Well, how is your son getting on?"

"Not so bad, Monsieur le Curé; I had a letter from him yesterday. He does not complain; he is very well; only he says there are no Kroomirs. Poor boy! I have been saving for a month, and I think I shall soon be able to send him ten francs."

"You shall send him thirty francs. Take this."

"Thirty francs! Monsieur le Curé, you give me thirty francs?"

"Yes, that is for you."

"For my boy?"

"For your boy. But listen; you must know from whom it comes, and you must take care to tell your son when you write to him."

Again the little speech about the new owners of Longueval, and again the adjuration to remember them in their prayers. At six o'clock he returned home, exhausted with fatigue, but with his soul filled with joy.

"I have given away all," he cried, as soon as he saw Pauline, "all! all! all!"

He dined, and then went in the evening to perform the usual service for the month of Mary. But this time, the harmonium was silent; Miss Percival was no longer there.

The little organist of the evening before was at that moment much perplexed. On two couches in her dressing-room were spread two frocks—a white and a blue. Bettina was meditating which of these two frocks she would wear to the opera that evening. After long hesitation she fixed on the blue. At half-past nine the two sisters ascended the grand staircase at the opera-house.

Just as they entered their box the curtain rose on the second scene of the second act of *Aïda*, that containing the ballet and march.

Two young men, Roger de Puymartin and Louis de Martillet, were seated in the front of a stage-box. The young ladies of the *corps de ballet* had not yet appeared, and these gentlemen, having no occupation, were amusing themselves with looking about the house. The appearance of Miss Percival made a strong impression upon both.

"Ah! ah!" said Puymartin, "there she is, the little golden nugget!"

"She is perfectly dazzling this evening, this little golden nugget," continued Martillet. "Look at her, at the line of her neck, the fall of her shoulders—still a young girl, and already a woman."

"Yes, she is charming, and tolerably well off into the bargain."

"Fifteen millions of her own, and the silver mine is still productive."

"Bérulle told me twenty-five millions, and he is very well up in American affairs."

"Twenty-five millions! A pretty haul for Romanelli!"

"What? Romanelli!"

"Report says that that will be a match; that it is already settled."

"A match may be arranged, but with Montessan, not with Romanelli. Ah! at last! Here is the ballet."

They ceased to talk. The ballet in *Aïda* lasts only five minutes, and for those five minutes they had come. Consequently they must be enjoyed respectfully, re-

ligiously, for there is that peculiarity among a number of the *habitués* of the opera, that they chatter like magpies when they ought to be silent, to listen, and that tehy observe the most absolute silence when they might be allowed to speak, while looking on.

The trumpets of *Aïda* had given their last heroic *fanfare* in honor of Rhadames before the great sphinxes under the green foliage of the palm-trees, the dancers advanced, the light trembling on their spangled robes, and took possession of the stage.

With much attention and pleasure Mrs. Scott followed the evolutions of the ballet, but Bettina had suddenly become thoughtful, on perceiving in a box, on the other side of the house, a tall, dark young man. Miss Percival talked to herself, and said:

"What shall I do? What shall I decide on? Must I marry him, that handsome, tall fellow over there, who is watching me, for it is I that he is looking at? He will come into our box directly this act is over, and then I have only to say, 'I have decided; there is my hand; I will be your wife,' and then all would be settled! I should be Princess! Princess Romanelli! Princess Bettina! Bettina Romanelli! The names go well together; they sound very pretty. Would it amuse me to be a princess? Yes—and no! Among all the young men in Paris, who, during the last year, have run after my money, this Prince Romanelli is the one who pleases me best. One of these days I must make up my mind to marry. I think he loves me. Yes, but the question is, do I love him? No, I don't think I do, and I should so much like to love—so much, so much!"

At the precise moment when these reflections were passing through Bettina's pretty head, Jean, alone in his study, seated before his desk with a great book under the shade of his lamp, looked through, and took notes of, the campaigns of Turenne. He had been directed to give a course of instruction to the non-commissioned officers of the regiment, and was prudently preparing his lesson for the next day.

But in the midst of his notes—Nordlingen, 1645; les Dunes, 1658; Mulhausen and Turckheim, 1674–1675—he suddenly perceived (Jean did not draw very badly) a sketch, a woman's portrait, which all at once appeared under his pen. What was she doing there, in the middle of Turenne's victories, this pretty little woman? And then who was she—Mrs. Scott or Miss Percival? How could he tell? They resembled each other so much; and, laboriously, Jean returned to the history of the campaigns of Turenne.

And at the same moment, the Abbé Constantin, on his knees before his little wooden bedstead, called down, with all the strength of his soul, the blessings of Heaven on the two women through whose bounty he had passed such a sweet and happy day. He prayed God to bless Mrs. Scott in her children, and to give to Miss Percival a husband after her own heart.

CHAPTER V

THE FAIR AMERICANS

ORMERLY Paris belonged to the Parisians, and that at no very remote period—thirty or forty years ago. At that epoch the French were the masters of Paris, as the English are the masters of London, the Spaniards of Madrid, and the Russians of St. Petersburg. Those times are no more. Other countries still have their frontiers; there are now none to France. Paris has become an immense Babel, a universal and international city. Foreigners do not only come to visit Paris; they come there to live. At the present day we have in Paris a Russian colony, a Spanish colony, a Levantine colony, an American colony. The foreigners have already conquered from us the greater part of the Champs-Elysées and the Boulevard Malesherbes; they advance, they extend their outworks; we retreat, pressed back by the invaders; we are obliged to expatriate ourselves. We have begun to found Parisian colonies in the plains of Passy, in the plain of Monceau, in quarters which formerly were not Paris at all, and which are not quite even now. Among the foreign colonies, the richest, the most populous, the most brilliant, is the American colony. There

is a moment when an American feels himself rich enough, a Frenchman never. The American then stops, draws breath, and while still husbanding the capital, no longer spares the income. He knows how to spend, the Frenchman knows only how to save.

The Frenchman has only one real luxury—his revolutions. Prudently and wisely he reserves himself for them, knowing well that they will cost France dear, but that, at the same time, they will furnish the opportunity for advantageous investments. The Frenchman says to himself:

"Let us hoard! let us hoard! let us hoard! Some of these mornings there will be a revolution, which will make the 5 per cents. fall 50 or 60 francs. I will buy then. Since revolutions are inevitable, let us try at least to make them profitable."

They are always talking about the people who are ruined by revolutions, but perhaps the number of those enriched by revolutions is still greater.

The Americans experience the attraction of Paris very strongly. There is no town in the world where it is easier or more agreeable to spend a great dial of money. For many reasons, both of race and origin, this attraction exercised over Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival a very remarkable power.

The most French of our colonies is Canada, which is no longer ours. The recollection of their first home has been preserved faithfully and tenderly in the hearts of the emigrants to Montreal and Quebec. Susie Percival had received from her mother an entirely French education, and she had brought up her sister in the same

love of our country. The two sisters felt themselves Frenchwomen; still better, Parisians. As soon as the avalanche of dollars had descended upon them, the same desire seized them both—to come and live in Paris. They demanded France as if it had been their fatherland. Mr. Scott made some opposition.

"If I go away from here," he said, "your incomes will suffer."

"What does that matter?" replied Susie. "We are rich—too rich. Do let us go. We shall be so happy, so delighted!"

Mr. Scott allowed himself to be persuaded, and, at the beginning of January, 1880, Susie wrote the following letter to her friend, Katie Norton, who had lived in Paris for some years:

"Victory! It is decided! Richard has consented. I shall arrive in April, and become a Frenchwoman again. You offered to undertake all the preparations for our settlement in Paris. I am horribly presuming —I accept! When I arrive in Paris, I should like to be able to enjoy Paris, and not be obliged to lose my first month in running after upholsterers, coach-builders, horse-dealers. I should like, on arriving at the railway station, to find awaiting me *my* carriage, *my* coachman, *my* horses. That very day I should like you to dine with me at my home. Hire or buy a mansion, engage the servants, choose the horses, the carriages, the liveries. I depend entirely upon you. As long as the liveries are blue, that is the only point. This line is added at the request of Bettina.

"We shall bring only seven persons with us. Richard

will have his valet, Bettina and I two ladies' maids; then there are the two governesses for the children, and, besides these, two boys, Toby and Bobby, who ride to perfection. We should never find in Paris such a perfect pair.

"Everything else, people and things, we shall leave in New York. No, not quite everything; I had forgotten four little ponies, four little gems, black as ink. We have not the heart to leave them; we shall drive them in a phaeton; it is delightful. Both Bettina and I drive four-in-hand very well. Ladies can drive four-in-hand in the Bois very early in the morning; can't they? Here it is quite possible.

"Above all, my dear Katie, do not consider money. Be as extravagant as you like, that is all I ask."

The same day that Mrs. Norton received this letter witnessed the failure of a certain Garneville. He was a great speculator who had been on a false scent. Stocks had fallen just when he had expected a rise. This Garneville had, six weeks before, installed himself in a brand-new house, which had no other fault than a too startling magnificence.

Mrs. Norton signed an agreement—100,000 francs a year, with the option of buying house and furniture for 2,000,000 during the first year of possession. A famous upholsterer undertook to correct and subdue the exaggerated splendor of a loud and gorgeous luxury.

That done, Mrs. Scott's friend had the good fortune to lay her hand on two of those eminent artists without whom the routine of a great house can neither be established nor carried on. The first, a *chef* of the first

rank, who had just left an ancient mansion of the Faubourg St. Germain, to his great regret, for he had aristocratic inclinations.

"Never," said he to Mrs. Norton, "never would I have left the service of Madame la Duchesse if she had kept up her establishment on the same footing as formerly; but Madame la Duchesse has four children—two sons who have run through a good deal, and two daughters who will soon be of an age to marry; they must have their dowries. Therefore, Madame la Duchesse is obliged to draw in a little, and the house is no longer important enough for me."

This distinguished character, of course, made his conditions. Though excessive, they did not alarm Mrs. Norton, who knew that he was a man of the most serious merit; but he, before deciding, asked permission to telegraph to New York. He wished to make certain inquiries. The reply was favorable; he accepted.

The second great artist was a stud-groom of the rarest and highest capacity, who was just about to retire after having made his fortune. He consented, however, to organize the stables for Mrs. Scott. It was thoroughly understood that he should have every liberty in purchasing the horses, that he should wear no livery, that he should choose the coachmen, the grooms, and everyone connected with the stables; that he should never have less than fifteen horses in the stables, that no bargain should be made with the coach-builder or saddler without his intervention, and that he should never mount the box, except early in the morning, in plain clothes, to

give lessons in driving to the ladies and children, if necessary.

The cook took possession of his stores, and the stud-groom of his stables. Everything else was only a question of money, and with regard to this Mrs. Norton made full use of her extensive powers. She acted in conformity with the instructions she had received. In the short space of two months she performed prodigies, and that is how, when, on the 15th of April, 1880, Mr. Scott, Susie, and Bettina alighted from the mail train from Havre, at half-past four in the afternoon, they found Mrs. Norton at the station of St. Lazare, who said:

"*Your calêche* is there in the yard; behind it is a landau for the children; and behind the landau is an omnibus for the servants. The three carriages bear your monogram, are driven by your coachman, and drawn by your horses. Your address is 24 Rue Murillo, and here is the *menu* of your dinner to-night. You invited me two months ago; I accept, and will even take the liberty of bringing a dozen friends with me. I shall furnish everything, even the guests. But do not be alarmed; you know them all; they are mutual friends, and this evening we shall be able to judge of the merits of your cook."

The first Parisian who had the honor and pleasure of paying homage to the beauty of Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival was a little *Marmiton* fifteen years old, who stood there in his white clothes, his wicker basket on his head, at the moment when Mrs. Scott's carriage, entangled in the multitude of vehicles, slowly worked its way out of the station. The little cook stopped short

on the pavement, opened wide his eyes, looked at the two sisters with amazement, and boldly cast full in their faces the single word:

"*Mazette!*"

When Madame Récamier saw her first wrinkles and first gray hairs, she said to a friend:

"Ah! my dear, there are no more illusions left for me! From the day when I saw that the little chimney-sweeps no longer turned round in the street to look at me, I understood that all was over."

The opinion of the confectioners' boys is, in similar cases, of equal value with the opinion of the little chimney-sweeps. All was not over for Susie and Bettina; on the contrary, all was only beginning.

Five minutes later, Mrs. Scott's carriage was ascending the Boulevard Haussmann to the slow and measured trot of a pair of admirable horses. Paris counted two Parisians the more.

The success of Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival was immediate, decisive, like a flash of lightning. The beauties of Paris are not classed and catalogued like the beauties of London; they do not publish their portraits in the illustrated papers, or allow their photographs to be sold at the stationers. However, there is always a little staff, consisting of a score of women, who represent the grace, and charm, and beauty of Paris, which women, after ten or twelve years' service, pass into the reserve, just like the old generals. Susie and Bettina immediately became part of this little staff. It was an affair of four-and-twenty hours—of less than four-and-twenty hours, for all passed between eight in the

morning and midnight, the day after their arrival in Paris.

Imagine a sort of little *féerie*, in three acts, of which the success increases from tableau to tableau:

1st. A ride at ten in the morning in the Bois, with the two marvellous grooms imported from America.

2d. A walk at six o'clock in the Allée des Acacias.

3d. An appearance at the opera at ten in the evening in Mrs. Norton's box.

The two novelties were immediately remarked, and appreciated as they deserved to be, by the thirty or forty persons who constitute a sort of mysterious tribunal, and who, in the name of all Paris, pass sentence beyond appeal. These thirty or forty persons have, from time to time, the fancy to declare "delicious" some woman who is manifestly ugly. That is enough; she is "delicious" from that moment.

The beauty of the two sisters was unquestionable. In the morning, it was their grace, their elegance, their distinction that attracted universal admiration; in the afternoon, it was declared that their walk had the freedom and ease of two young goddesses; in the evening, there was but one cry of rapture at the ideal perfection of their shoulders. From that moment, all Paris had for the two sisters the eyes of the little pastry-cook of the Rue d'Amsterdam; all Paris repeated his *Mazette*, though naturally with the variations and developments imposed by the usages of the world.

Mrs. Scott's drawing-room immediately became the fashion. The *habitués* of three or four great American houses transferred themselves to the Scotts, who had

three hundred persons at their first Wednesday. Their circle increased; there was a little of everything to be found in their set—Americans, Spaniards, Italians, Hungarians, Russians, and even Parisians.

When she had related her history to the Abbé Constantin, Mrs. Scott had not told all—one never does tell all. In a word, she was a coquette. Mr. Scott had the most perfect confidence in his wife, and left her entire liberty. He appeared very little; he was an honorable man, who felt a vague embarrassment at having made such a marriage, at having married so much money. Having a taste for business, he had great pleasure in devoting himself entirely to the administering of the two immense fortunes which were in his hands, in continually increasing them, and in saying every year to his wife and sister in-law:

"You are still richer than you were last year!"

Not content with watching with much prudence and ability over the interests which he had left in America, he launched in France into large speculations, and was as successful in Paris as he had been in New York. In order to make money, the first thing is to have no need of it.

They made love to Mrs. Scott to an enormous extent; they made love to her in French, in Italian, in English, in Spanish; for she knew those four languages, and there is one advantage that foreigners have over our poor Parisians, who usually know only their mother tongue, and have not the resource of international passions.

Naturally, Mrs. Scott did not drive her adorers from her presence. She had ten, twenty, thirty at a time.

No one could boast of any preference; to all she opposed the same amiable, laughing, joyous resistance. It was clear to all that the game amused her, and that she did not for a moment take it seriously. Mr. Scott never felt a moment's anxiety, and he was perfectly right. More, he enjoyed his wife's successes; he was happy in seeing her happy. He loved her dearly—a little more than she loved him. She loved him very much, and that was all. There is a great difference between *dearly* and *very much* when these two adverbs are placed after the verb *to love*.

As to Bettina, around her was a maddening whirl, an orgy of adulation. Such fortune! Such beauty! Miss Percival arrived in Paris on the 15th of April; a fortnight had not passed before the offers of marriage began to pour upon her. In the course of that first year, she might, had she wished it, have been married thirty-four times, and to what a variety of suitors!

They asked her hand for a young exile, who, under certain circumstances, might be called to ascend a throne—a very small one, it is true, but a throne nevertheless.

They asked her hand for a young duke, who would make a great figure at Court when France—as was inevitable—should recognize her errors, and bow down before her legitimate masters.

They asked her hand for a young prince, who would have a place on the steps of the throne when France—as was inevitable—should again knit together the chain of the Napoleonic traditions.

They asked her hand for a young Republican deputy,

who had just made a most brilliant début in the Chamber, and for whom the future reserved the most splendid destiny, for the Republic was now established in France on the most indestructible basis.

They asked her hand for a young Spaniard of the purest lineage, and she was given to understand that the *contrat* would be signed in the palace of a queen, who does not live far from the Arc de Triomphe. Besides, one can find her address in the *Almanach Bottin*, for at the present day, there are queens who have their address in Bottin between an attorney and a druggist; it is only the kings of France who no longer live in France.

They asked her hand for the son of a peer of England, and for the son of a member of the highest Viennese aristocracy; for the son of a Parisian banker, and for the son of a Russian ambassador; for a Hungarian count, and for an Italian prince; and also for various excellent young men who were nothing and had nothing —neither name nor fortune; but Bettina had granted them a waltz, and, believing themselves irresistible, they hoped that they had caused a flutter of that little heart.

But up to the present moment nothing had touched that little heart, and the reply had been the same to all —"No! no!" again "No!" always "No!"

Some days after that performance of *Aïda*, the two sisters had a rather long conversation on this great, this eternal question of marriage. A certain name had been pronounced by Mrs. Scott which had provoked on the part of Miss Percival the most decided and most

energetic refusal, and Susie had laughingly said to her sister:

"But, Bettina, you will be obliged to end by marrying."

"Yes, certainly, but I should be so sorry to marry without love. It seems to me that before I could resolve to do such a thing I must be in danger of dying an old maid, and I am not yet that."

"No, not yet."

"Let us wait, let us wait."

"Let us wait. But among all these lovers whom you have been dragging after you for the last year, there have been some very nice, very amiable, and it is really a little strange if none of them——"

"None, my Susie, none, absolutely none. Why should I not tell you the truth? Is it their fault? Have they gone unskilfully to work? Could they, in managing better, have found the way to my heart? or is the fault in me? Is it perhaps, that the way to my heart is a steep, rocky, inaccessible way, by which no one will ever pass? Am I a horrid little creature, arid, cold, and condemned never to love?

"I do not think so."

"Neither do I, but up to the present time that is my history. No, I have never felt anything which resembled love. You are laughing, and I can guess why. You are saying to yourself, 'A little girl like that pretending to know what love is!' You are right; I do not know, but I have a pretty good idea. To love—is it not to prefer to all in the world one certain person?"

"Yes; it is really that."

"Is it not never to weary of seeing that person, or of hearing him? Is it not to cease to live when he is not there, and to immediately begin to revive when he reappears?"

"Oh, but this is romantic love."

"Well, that is the love of which I dream, and that is the love which does not come—not at all till now; and yet that person preferred by me to all and everything does exist. Do you know who it is?"

"No, I do not know; I do not know, but I have a little suspicion."

"Yes, it is you, my dearest, and it is perhaps you, naughty sister, who makes me so insensible and cruel on this point. I love you too much; you fill my heart; you have occupied it entirely; there is no room for any one else. Prefer any one to you! Love any one more than you! That will never, never be!"

"Oh, yes, it will."

"Oh, no. Love differently, perhaps, but more—no. He must not count upon that, this gentleman whom I expect, and who does not arrive."

"Do not be afraid, my Betty, there is room in your heart for all whom you should love—for your husband, for your children, and that without your old sister losing anything. The heart is very little, but it is also very large."

Bettina tenderly embraced her sister; then, resting her head coaxingly on Susie's shoulder, she said:

"If, however, you are tired of keeping me with you, if you are in a hurry to get rid of me, do you know what I will do? I will put the names of two of these gentle-

men in a basket, and draw lots. There are two who at the last extremity would not be absolutely disagreeable."

"Which two?"

"Guess."

"Prince Romanelli."

"For one! And the other?"

"Monsieur de Montessan."

"Those are the two! It is just that. Those two would be acceptable, but only acceptable, and that is not enough."

This is why Bettina awaited with extreme impatience the day when she should leave Paris, and take up their abode in Longueval. She was a little tired of so much pleasure, so much success, so many offers of marriage. The whirlpool of Parisian gayety had seized her on her arrival, and would not let her go, not for one hour of halt or rest. She felt the need of being given up to herself for a few days, to herself alone, to consult and question herself at her leisure, in the complete solitude of the country—in a word, to belong to herself again.

Was not Bettina all sprightly and joyous when, on the 14th of June, they took the train for Longueval? As soon as she was alone in a *coupé* with her sister:

"Ah!" she cried, "how happy I am! Let us breathe a little, quite alone, you and me, for a few days. The Nortons and Turners do not come till the 25th, do they?"

"No, not till the 25th."

"We will pass our lives riding or driving in the woods, in the fields. Ten days of liberty! And during those ten days no more lovers, no more lovers! And all those

lovers, with what are they in love, with me or my money? That is the mystery, the unfathomable mystery."

The engine whistled; the train put itself slowly into motion. A wild idea entered Bettina's head. She leaned out of the window and cried, accompanying her words with a little wave of the hand:

"Good-by, my lovers, good-by."

Then she threw herself suddenly into a corner of the *coupé* with a hearty burst of laughter.

"Oh, Susie, Susie!"

"What is the matter?"

"A man with a red flag in his hand; he saw me, and he looked so astonished."

"You are so irrational!"

"Yes, it is true, to have called out of the window like that, but not to be happy at thinking that we are going to live alone, *en garçons*."

"Alone! alone! Not exactly that. To begin with, we shall have two people to dinner to-night."

"Ah! that is true. But those two people, I shall not be at all sorry to see them again. Yes, I shall be well pleased to see the old Curé again, but especially the young officer."

"What! especially?"

"Certainly; because what the lawyer from Souvigny told us the other day is so touching, and what that great artilleryman did when he was quite little was so good, so good, that this evening I shall seek for an opportunity of telling him what I think of it, and I shall find one."

Then Bettina, abruptly changing the course of the conversation, continued:

"Did they send the telegram yesterday to Edwards about the ponies?"

"Yes, yesterday before dinner."

"Oh, you will let me drive them up to the house. It will be such fun to go through the town, and to drive up at full speed into the court in front of the entrance. Tell me, will you?"

"Yes, certainly, you shall drive the ponies."

"Oh, how nice of you, Susie!"

Edwards was the stud-groom. He had arrived at Longueval three days before. He deigned to come himself to meet Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival. He brought the phaeton drawn by the four black ponies. He was waiting at the station. The passage of the ponies through the principal street of the town had made a sensation. The population rushed out of their houses, and asked eagerly:

"What is it? What can it be?"

Some ventured the opinion——

"It is, perhaps, a travelling circus."

But exclamations arose on all sides:

"You did not notice the style of it—the carriage and the harness shining like gold, and the little horses with their white rosettes on each side of the head."

The crowd collected around thes tation, and those who were curious learned that they were going to witness the arrival of the new owners of Longueval. They were slightly disenchanted when the two sisters appeared, very pretty, but in very simple travelling costumes.

These good people had almost expected the apparition of two princesses out of fairy tales, clad in silk and brocade, sparkling with rubies and diamonds. But they opened wide their eyes when they saw Bettina walk slowly round the four ponies, caressing one after another lightly with her hand, and examining all the details of the team with the air of a connoisseur.

Having made her inspection, Bettina, without the least hurry, drew off her long Swedish gloves, and replaced them by a pair of dog-skin which she took from the pocket of the carriage apron. Then she slipped on to the box in the place of Edwards, receiving from him the reins and whip with extreme dexterity, without allowing the already excited horses to perceive that they had changed hands.

Mrs. Scott seated herself beside her sister. The ponies pranced, curveted, and threatened to rear.

"Be very careful, miss," said Edwards; "the ponies are very fresh to-day."

"Do not be afraid," replied Bettina. "I know them."

Miss Percival had a hand at once very firm, very light, and very just. She held in the ponies for a few moments, forcing them to keep their own places; then, waving the long thong of her whip round the leaders, she started her little team at once, with incomparable skill, and left the station with an air of triumph, in the midst of a long murmur of astonishment and admiration.

The trot of the black ponies rang on the little oval paving-stones of Souvigny. Bettina held them well together until she had left the town, but as soon as she saw before her a clear mile and a half of highroad—almost

on a dead level—she let them gradually increase their speed, till they went like the wind.

"Oh! how happy I am, Susie!" cried she; "and we shall trot and gallop all alone on these roads. Susie, would you like to drive? It is such a delight when one can let them go at full speed. They are so spirited and so gentle. Come, take the reins."

"No; keep them. It is a greater pleasure to me to see you happy."

"Oh, as to that, I am perfectly happy. I do like so much to drive four-in-hand with plenty of space before me. At Paris, even in the morning, I did not dare to any longer. They looked at me so, it annoyed me. But here—no one! no one! no one!"

At the moment when Bettina, already a little intoxicated with the bracing air and liberty, gave forth triumphantly these three exclamations, "No one! no one! no one!" a rider appeared, walking his horse in the direction of the carriage. It was Paul de Lavardens. He had been watching for more than an hour for the pleasure of seeing the Americans pass.

"You are mistaken," said Susie to Bettina; "there is some one."

"A peasant; they don't count; they won't ask me to marry them."

"It is not a peasant at all. Look!"

Paul de Lavardens, while passing the carriage, made the two sisters a highly correct bow, from which one at once scented the Parisian.

The ponies were going at such a rate that the meeting was over like a flash of lightning.

Bettina cried:

"Who is that gentleman who has just bowed to us?"

"I had scarcely time to see, but I seemed to recognize him."

"You recognized him?"

"Yes, and I would wager that I have seen him at our house this winter."

"Heavens! if it should be one of the thirty-four! Is all that going to begin again?"

CHAPTER VI

A LITTLE DINNER FOR FOUR

THAT same day, at half-past seven, Jean went to fetch the Curé, and the two walked together up to the house. During the last month a perfect army of workmen had taken possession of Longueval; all the inns in the village were making their fortunes. Enormous furniture wagons brought cargoes of furniture and decorations from Paris. Forty-eight hours before the arrival of Mrs. Scott, Mademoiselle Marbeau, the postmistress, and Madame Lormier, the mayoress, had wormed themselves into the castle, and the account they gave of the interior turned every one's head. The old furniture had disappeared, banished to the attics; one moved among a perfect accumulation of wonders. And the stables! and the coach-houses! A special train had brought from Paris, under the high superintendence of Edwards, a dozen carriages—and such carriages! Twenty horses—and such horses!

The Abbé Constantin thought that he knew what luxury was. Once a year he dined with his bishop, Monseigneur Faubert, a rich and amiable prelate, who entertained rather largely. The Curé, till now, had

thought that there was nothing in the world more sumptuous than the Episcopal palace of Souvigny, or the castles of Lavardens and Longueval.

He began to understand, from what he was told of the new splendors of Longueval, that the luxury of the great houses of the present day must surpass to a singular degree the sober and severe luxury of the great houses of former times.

As soon as the Curé and Jean had entered the avenue in the park, which led to the house:

"Look! Jean," said the Curé; "what a change! All this part of the park used to be quite neglected, and now all the paths are gravelled and raked. I shall not be able to feel myself at home as I used to do: it will be too grand. I shall not find again my old brown velvet easy-chair, in which I so often fell asleep after dinner, and if I fall asleep this evening what will become of me? You will think of it, Jean, and if you see that I begin to forget myself, you will come behind me and pinch my arm gently, won't you? You promise me?"

"Certainly, certainly, I promise you."

Jean paid but slight attention to the conversation of the Curé. He felt extremely impatient to see Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival again, but this impatience was mingled with very keen anxiety. Would he find them in the great salon at Longueval the same as he had seen them in the little dining-room at the vicarage? Perhaps, instead of those two women, so perfectly simple and familiar, amusing themselves with this little improvised dinner, and who, the very first day, had treated him

with so much grace and cordiality, would he find two pretty dolls—worldly, elegant, cold, and correct? Would his first impression be effaced? Would it disappear? or, on the contrary, would the impression in his heart become still sweeter and deeper?

They ascended the six steps at the entrance, and were received in the hall by two tall footmen with the most dignified and imposing air. This hall had formerly been a vast, frigid apartment, with bare stone walls. These walls were now covered with admirable tapestry, representing mythological subjects. The Curé dared scarcely glance at this tapestry; it was enough for him to perceive that the goddesses who wandered through these shades wore costumes of antique simplicity.

One of the footmen opened wide the folding-doors of the salon. It was there that one had generally found the old Marquise, on the right of the high chimney-piece, and on the left had stood the brown velvet easy-chair.

No brown easy-chair now! That old relic of the Empire, which was the basis of the arrangement of the salon, had been replaced by a marvellous specimen of tapestry of the end of the last century. Then a crowd of little easy-chairs, and ottomans of all forms and all colors, were scattered here and there with an appearance of disorder which was the perfection of art.

As soon as Mrs. Scott saw the Curé and Jean enter, she rose, and going to meet them, said:

"How kind of you to come, Monsieur le Curé, and you, too, Monsieur Jean. How pleased I am to see you, my first, my only friends down here!"

Jean breathed again. It was the same woman.

"Will you allow me," added Mrs. Scott, "to introduce my children to you? Harry and Bella, come here."

Harry was a very pretty little boy of six, and Bella a very charming little girl, five years old. They had their mother's large, dark eyes, and her golden hair.

After the Curé had kissed the two children, Harry, who was looking with admiration at Jean's uniform, said to his mother:

"And the soldier, mamma, must we kiss him, too?"

"If you like," replied Mrs. Scott, "and if he will allow it."

A moment after, the two children were installed upon Jean's knees, and overwhelming him with questions.

"Are you an officer?"

"Yes, I am an officer."

"What in?"

"In the artillery."

"The artillery! Oh, you are one of the men who fire the cannon. Oh, how I should like to be quite near when they fire the cannon!"

"Will you take us some day when they fire the cannon? Tell me, will you?"

Meanwhile, Mrs. Scott chatted with the Curé, and Jean, while replying to the children's questions, looked at Mrs. Scott. She wore a white muslin frock, but the muslin disappeared under a complete avalanche of little flounces of *Valenciennes*. The dress was cut out in front in a large square, her arms were bare to the elbow, a large bouquet of red roses at the opening of

her dress, a red rose fixed in her hair, with a diamond *agraffe*—nothing more.

Mrs. Scott suddenly perceived that the children had taken entire possession of Jean, and exclaimed:

"Oh, I beg your pardon. Harry, Bella!"

"Oh, pray let them stay with me."

"I am so sorry to keep you waiting for dinner; my sister is not down yet. Oh! here she is!"

Bettina entered. The same frock of white muslin, the same delicate mass of lace, the same red roses, the same grace, the same beauty, and the same smiling, amiable, candid manner.

"How do you do, Monsieur le Curé? I am delighted to see you. Have you pardoned my dreadful intrusion of the other day?"

Then, turning toward Jean and offering him her hand:

"How do you do, Monsieur—Monsieur—Oh! I can not remember your name, and yet we seem to be already old friends, Monsieur——"

"Jean Reynaud."

"Jean Reynaud, that is it. How do you do, Monsieur Reynaud? I warn you faithfully that when we really are old friends—that is to say, in about a week—I shall call you Monsieur Jean. It is a pretty name, Jean."

Up to the moment when Bettina appeared Jean had said to himself:

"Mrs. Scott is the prettier!"

When he felt Bettina's little hand slip into his arm, and when she turned toward him her delicious face, he said:

"Miss Percival is the prettier!"

But his perplexities gathered round him again when he was seated between the two sisters. If he looked to the right, love threatened him from that direction, and if he looked to the left, the danger removed immediately, and passed to the left.

Conversation began, easy, animated, confidential. The two sisters were charmed; they had already walked in the park; they promised themselves a long ride in the forest to-morrow. Riding was their passion, their madness. It was also Jean's passion, so that after a quarter of an hour they begged him to join them the next day. There was no one who knew the country round better than he did; it was his native place. He should be so happy to do the honors of it, and to show them numbers of delightful little spots which, without him, they would never discover.

"Do you ride every day?" asked Bettina.

"Every day and sometimes twice. In the morning I am on duty, and in the evening I ride for my own pleasure."

"Early in the morning?"

"At half-past five."

"At half-past five every morning?"

"Yes, except Sunday."

"Then you get up——"

"At half-past four."

"And is it light?"

"Oh, just now, broad daylight."

"To get up at half-past four is admirable; we often finish our day just when yours is beginning. And are you fond of your profession?"

"Very. It is an excellent thing to have one's life plain before one, with exact and definite duties."

"And yet," said Mrs. Scott, "not to be one's own master—to be always obliged to obey."

"That is perhaps what suits me best; there is nothing easier than to obey, and then to learn to obey is the only way of learning to command."

"Ah! since you say so, it must be true."

"Yes, no doubt," added the Curé; "but he does not tell you that he is the most distinguished officer in his regiment, that——"

"Oh! pray do not."

The Curé, in spite of the resistance of Jean, was about to launch into a panegyric on his godson, when Bettina, interposing, said:

"It is unnecessary, Monsieur le Curé, do not say anything, we know already all that you would tell us, we have been so indiscreet as to make inquiries about Monsieur—oh, I was just going to say Monsieur Jean —about Monsieur Reynaud. Well, the information we received was excellent!"

"I am curious to know," said Jean.

"Nothing! nothing! you shall know nothing. I do not wish to make you blush, and you would be obliged to blush."

Then turning toward the Curé, "And about you, too, Monsieur l'Abbé, we have had some information. It appears that you are a saint."

"Oh! as to that, it is perfectly true," cried Jean.

It was the Curé this time who cut short the eloquence of Jean. Dinner was almost over. The old priest had

not got through this dinner without experiencing many emotions. They had repeatedly presented to him complicated and scientific constructions upon which he had only ventured with a trembling hand. He was afraid of seeing the whole crumble beneath his touch; the trembling castles of jelly, the pyramids of truffles, the fortresses of cream, the bastions of pastry, the rocks of ice. Otherwise the Abbé Constantin dined with an excellent appetite, and did not recoil before two or three glasses of champagne. He was no foe to good cheer; perfection is not of this world; and if gormandizing were, as they say, a cardinal sin, how many good priests would be damned!

Coffee was served on the terrace in front of the house; in the distance was heard the harsh voice of the old village clock striking nine. Woods and fields were slumbering; the avenues in the park showed only as long, undulating, and undecided lines. The moon slowly rose over the tops of the great trees.

Bettina took a box of cigars from the table. "Do you smoke?" said she.

"Yes, Miss Percival."

"Take one, Monsieur Jean. It can't be helped. I have said it. Take one—but no, listen to me first."

And speaking in a low voice, while offering him the box of cigars:

"It is getting dark, now you may blush at your ease. I will tell you what I did not say at dinner. An old lawyer in Souvigny, who was your guardian, came to see my sister in Paris, about the payment for the place; he told us what you did after your father's death, when

you were only a child, what you did for that poor mother, and for that poor young girl. Both my sister and I were much touched by it."

"Yes," continued Mrs. Scott, "and that is why we have received you to-day with so much pleasure. We should not have given such a reception to every one, of that you may be sure. Well, now take your cigar, my sister is waiting."

Jean could not find a word in reply. Bettina stood there with the box of cigars in her two hands, her eyes fixed frankly on the countenance of Jean. At the moment, she tasted a true and keen pleasure which may be expressed by this phrase:

"It seems to me that I see before me a man of honor."

"And now," said Mrs. Scott, "let us sit here and enjoy this delicious night; take your coffee, smoke——"

"And do not let us talk, Susie, do not let us talk. This great silence of the country, after the great noise and bustle of Paris, is delightful! Let us sit here without speaking; let us look at the sky, the moon, and the stars."

All four, with much pleasure, carried out this little programme. Susie and Bettina, calm, reposeful, absolutely separated from their existence of yesterday, already felt a tenderness for the place which had just received them, and was going to keep them. Jean was less tranquil; the words of Miss Percival had caused him profound emotion, his heart had not yet quite regained its regular throb.

But the happiest of all was the Abbé Constantin.

This little episode which had caused Jean's modesty such a rude, yet sweet trial, had brought him exquisite joy, the Abbé bore his godson such affection. The most tender father never loved more warmly the dearest of his children. When the old Curé looked at the young officer, he often said to himself:

"Heaven has been too kind; I am a priest, and I have a son!"

The Abbé sank into a very agreeable reverie; he felt himself at home, he felt himself too much at home; by degrees his ideas became hazy and confused, reverie became drowsiness, drowsiness became slumber, the disaster was soon complete, irreparable; the Curé slept, and slept profoundly. This marvellous dinner, and the two or three glasses of champagne may have had something to do with the catastrophe.

Jean perceived nothing; he had forgotten the promise made to his godfather. And why had he forgotten it? Because Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival had thought proper to put their feet on the footstools, placed in front of their great wicker garden-chairs filled with cushions; then they had thrown themselves lazily back in their chairs, and their muslin skirts had become raised a little, a very little, but yet enough to display four little feet, the lines of which showed very distinctly and clearly beneath two pretty clouds of white lace. Jean looked at these little feet, and asked himself this question:

"Which are the smaller?"

While he was trying to solve this problem, Bettina, all at once, said to him in a low voice:

"Monsieur Jean! Monsieur Jean!"

"Miss Percival?"

"Look at the Curé, he is asleep."

"Oh! it is my fault."

"How your fault?" asked Mrs. Scott, also in a low voice.

"Yes; my godfather rises at daybreak, and goes to bed very early; he told me to be sure and prevent his falling asleep; when Madame de Longueval was here he very often had a nap after dinner. You have shown him so much kindness that he has fallen back into his old habits."

"And he is perfectly right," said Bettina, "do not make a noise, do not wake him."

"You are too good, Miss Percival, but the air is getting a little fresh."

"Ah! that is true, he might catch cold. Stay, I will go and fetch a wrap for him."

"I think, Miss Percival, it would be better to try and wake him skilfully, so that he should not suspect that you had seen him asleep."

"Let me do it," said Bettina. "Susie, let us sing together, very softly at first, then we will raise our voices little by little, let us sing."

"Willingly, but what shall we sing?"

"Let us sing, '*Quelque chose d'enjantin*,' the words are suitable."

Susie and Bettina began to sing:

> If I had but two little wings,
> And were a little feathery bird,

Their sweet and penetrating voices had an exquisite

sonority in that profound silence. The Abbé heard nothing, did not move. Charmed with this little concert, Jean said to himself:

"Heaven grant that my godfather may not wake too soon!"

The voices became clearer and louder:

> But in my sleep to you I fly,
> I'm always with you in my sleep.

Yet the Abbé did not stir.

"How he sleeps," said Susie, "it is a crime to wake him."

"But we must; louder, Susie, louder."

Susie and Bettina both gave free scope to the power of their voices.

> Sleep stays not, though a monarch bids,
> So I love to wake ere break of day.

The Curé woke with a start. After a short moment of anxiety he breathed again. Evidently no one had noticed that he had been asleep. He collected himself, stretched himself prudently, slowly, he was saved!

A quarter of an hour later the two sisters accompanied the Curé and Jean to the little gate of the park, which opened into the village a few yards from the vicarage; they had nearly reached the gate when Bettina said all at once to Jean:

"Ah! all this time I have had a question to ask you. This morning when we arrived, we met on the way a slight young man, with a fair mustache, he was riding a black horse, and bowed to us as we passed."

"It was Paul de Lavardens, one of my friends; he

has already had the honor of being introduced to you, but rather vaguely, and his ambition is to be presented again."

"Well, you shall bring him one of these days," said Mrs. Scott.

"After the 25th!" cried Bettina. "Not before! not before! No one till then; till then we will see no one but you, Monsieur Jean. But you, it is very extraordinary, and I don't quite know how it has happened, you don't seem anybody to us. The compliment is perhaps not very well turned, but do not make a mistake, it is a compliment. I intended to be excessively amiable in speaking to you thus."

"And so you are, Miss Percival."

"So much the better if I have been so fortunate as to make myself understood. Good-by, Monsieur Jean—till to-morrow!"

Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival returned slowly toward the castle.

"And now, Susie," said Bettina, "scold me well, I expect it, I have deserved it."

"Scold you! Why?"

"You are going to say, I am sure, that I have been too familiar with that young man."

"No, I shall not say that. From the first day that young man has made the most favorable impression upon me; he inspires me with perfect confidence."

"And so he does me."

"I am persuaded that it would be well for us both to try to make a friend of him."

"With all my heart, as far as I am concerned, so

much the more as I have seen many young men since we have lived in France. Oh! yes, I have, indeed! Well! this is the first, positively the first, in whose eyes I have not clearly read, 'Oh, how glad I should be to marry the millions of that little person!' That was written in the eyes of all the others, but not in his eyes. Now, here we are at home again. Good-night, Susie—to-morrow."

Mrs. Scott went to see and kiss her sleeping children.

Bettina remained long, leaning on the balustrade of her balcony.

"It seems to me," said she, "that I am going to be very fond of this place."

CHAPTER VII

CONFIDENCES

THE next morning, on returning from drill, Jean found Paul de Lavardens waiting for him at the barracks; he scarcely allowed him time to dismount, and the moment he had him alone:

"Quick," said he, "describe your dinner-party of yesterday. I saw them myself in the morning; the little one was driving four ponies, and with an amount of audacity! I bowed to them; did they mention me? Did they recognize me? When will you take me to Longueval? Answer me."

"Answer? Yes. But which question first?"

"The last."

"When shall I take you to Longueval?"

"Yes."

"Well, in ten days; they don't want to see any one just now."

"Then you are not going back to Longueval for ten days?"

"Oh, I shall go back to-day at four o'clock. But I don't count, you know. Jean Reynaud, the Curé's godson. That is why I have penetrated so easily into the confidence of these two charming women. I have pre-

sented myself under the patronage and with the guarantee of the Church. And then they have discovered that I could render them little services. I know the country very well, and they will make use of me as a guide. In a word, I am nobody; while you, Count Paul de Lavardens, you are somebody; so fear nothing, your turn will come with the *fêtes* and balls. Then you will be resplendent in all your glory, and I shall return very humbly into my obscurity."

"You may laugh at me as much as you like; it is none the less true that during those ten days you will steal a march upon me—upon *me!*"

"How upon you?"

"Now, Jean, do you want to make me believe that you are not already in love with one of these two women? Is it possible? So much beauty, so much luxury. Luxury to that degree upsets me. Those black ponies with their white rosettes! I dreamed of them last night, and that little—Bettina, is it not?"

"Yes, Bettina."

"Bettina—Countess Bettina de Lavardens! Doesn't that sound well enough! and what a perfect husband she would have in me! To be the husband of a woman possessing boundless wealth, that is my destiny. It is not so easy as one may suppose. I have already run through something, and—if my mother had not stopped me! but I am quite ready to begin again. Oh, how happy that girl would be with me! I would create around her the existence of a fairy queen. In all her luxury she would feel the taste, the art, and

the skill of her husband. I would pass my life in adoring her, in displaying her beauty, in petting her, in bearing her triumphant through the world. I would study her beauty in order to give it the frame that best suited it. 'If he were not there,' she would say, 'I should not be so beautiful, so dazzling.' I should know not only how to love her, but how to amuse her. She would have something for her money, she would have love and pleasure. Come, Jean, do a good action, take me to Mrs. Scott's to-day."

"I cannot, I assure you."

"Well, then, in ten days; but I give you fair notice, I shall install myself at Longueval, and shall not move. In the first place it would please my mother; she is still a little prejudiced against the Americans. She says that she shall arrange not to see them, but I know my mother. Some day, when I shall go home in the evening and tell her: 'Mother, I have won the heart of a charming little person who is burdened with a capital of twenty millions—they exaggerate when they talk of hundreds of millions. You know these are the correct figures, and they are enough for me. That evening, then, my mother will be delighted, because, in her heart, what is it she desires for me? What all good mothers desire for their sons—a good marriage, or a discreet *liaison* with some one in society. At Longueval I find these two essentials, and I will accommodate myself very willingly to either. You will have the kindness to warn me in ten days—you will let me know which of the two you abandon to me, Mrs. Scott or Miss Percival?"

"You are mad, you are quite mad! I do not, I never shall think——"

"Listen, Jean. You are wisdom personified; you may say and do as you like, but remember what I say to you, Jean, you will fall in love in that house."

"I do not believe it," replied Jean, laughing.

"But I am absolutely sure of it. Good-by. I leave you to your duties."

That morning Jean was perfectly sincere. He had slept very well the previous night; the second interview with the two sisters had, as if by enchantment, dissipated the slight trouble which had agitated his soul after the first meeting. He prepared to meet them again with much pleasure, but also with much tranquillity; there was too much money in that house to permit the love of a poor devil like Jean to find place honestly there.

Friendship was another affair; with all his heart he wished, and with all his strength he sought, to establish himself peacefully in the esteem and regard of the sisters. He would try not to remark too much the beauty of Susie and Bettina; he would try not to forget himself as he had done the previous evening, in the contemplation of the four little feet resting on their footstools. They had said, very frankly, very cordially, to him: "You shall be our friend." That was all he desired—to be their friend—and that he would be.

During the ten days that followed, all conduced to the success of this enterprise. Susie, Bettina, the Curé, and Jean led the same life in the closest and most cordial intimacy.

Jean did not seek to analyze his feelings. He felt for these two women an equal affection; he was perfectly happy, perfectly tranquil. Then he was not in love, for love and tranquillity seldom dwell at peace in the same heart.

Jean, however, saw approach, with a little anxiety and sadness, the day which would bring to Longueval the Turners, and the Nortons, and the whole force of the American colony. The day came too soon.

On Friday, the 24th of June, at four o'clock, Jean arrived at the castle. Bettina received him alone, looking quite vexed.

"How annoying it is," said she, "my sister is not well; a little headache, nothing of consequence, it will be gone by to-morrow; but I dare not ride with you alone. In America I might; but here, it would not do, would it?"

"Certainly not," replied Jean.

"I must send you back, and I am so sorry."

"And so am I—I am very sorry to be obliged to go, and to lose this last day, which I had hoped to pass with you. However, since it must be, I will come to-morrow to inquire after your sister."

"She will see you herself, to-morrow; I repeat it is nothing serious. But do not run away in such a hurry, pray; will you not spare me a little quarter of an hour's conversation? I want to speak to you; sit down there, and now listen to me well. My sister and I had intended this evening, after dinner, to blockade you into a little corner of the drawing-room, and then she meant to tell you what I am going to try to say for us both.

But I am a little nervous. Do not laugh; it is a very serious matter. We wish to thank you for having been, ever since our arrival here, so good to us both."

"Oh, Miss Percival, pray, it is I who——"

"Oh, do not interrupt me, you will quite confuse me. I do not know how to get through with it. I maintain, besides, that the thanks are due from us, not from you. We arrived here two strangers. We have been fortunate enough immediately to find friends. Yes, friends. You have taken us by the hand, you have led us to our farmers, to our keepers; while your godfather took us to his poor—and everywhere you were so much beloved that from their confidence in you, they began, on your recommendation, to like us a little. You are adored about here; do you know that?"

"I was born here—all these good people have known me from my infancy, and are grateful to me for what my grandfather and father did for them; and then I am of their race, the race of the peasants; my great-grandfather was a laborer at Bargecourt, a village two miles from here."

"Oh! oh! you appear very proud of that!"

"Neither proud nor ashamed."

"I beg your pardon, you made a little movement of pride. Well, I can tell you that my mother's great-grandfather was a farmer in Brittany. He went to Canada at the end of the last century, when Canada was still French. And you love very much this place where you were born?"

"Very much. Perhaps I shall soon be obliged to leave it."

"Why?"

"When I get promotion, I shall have to exchange into another regiment, and I shall wander from garrison to garrison; but certainly, when I am an old commandant or old colonel, on half-pay, I shall come back, and live and die here, in the little house that was my father's."

"Always quite alone?"

"Why quite alone? I certainly hope not."

"You intend to marry?"

"Yes, certainly."

"You are trying to marry?"

"No; one may think of marrying, but one ought not to try to marry."

"And yet there are people who do try. Come, I can answer for that, and you even; people have wished to marry you."

"How do you know that?"

"Oh! I know all your little affairs so well; you are what they call a good match, and I repeat it, they have wished to marry you."

"Who told you that?"

"Monsieur le Curé."

"Then he was very wrong," said Jean, with a certain sharpness.

"No, no, he was not wrong. If any one has been to blame it is I. I soon discovered that your godfather was never so happy as when he was speaking of you. So when I was alone with him during our walks, to please him I talked of you, and he related your history to me. You are well off; you are very well off; from

Government you receive every month two hundred and thirteen francs and some centimes; am I correct?"

"Yes," said Jean, deciding to bear with a good grace his share in the Curé's indiscretions.

"You have eight thousand francs' income?"

"Nearly, not quite."

"Add to that your house, which is worth thirty thousand francs. You are in an excellent position, and people have asked your hand."

"Asked my hand! No, no."

"They have, they have, twice, and you have refused two very good marriages, two very good fortunes, if you prefer it—it is the same thing for so many people. Two hundred thousand francs in the one, three hundred thousand in the other case. It appears that these fortunes are enormous for the country! Yet you have refused! Tell me why."

"Well, it concerned two charming young girls."

"That is understood. One always says that."

"But whom I scarcely knew. They forced me—for I did resist—they forced me to spend two or three evenings with them last winter."

"And then?"

"Then—I don't quite know how to explain it to you. I did not feel the slightest touch of embarrassment, emotion, anxiety, or disturbance——"

"In fact," said Bettina, resolutely, "not the least suspicion of love."

"No, not the least, and I returned quite calmly to my bachelor den, for I think it is better not to marry than to marry without love."

"And I think so, too."

She looked at him, he looked at her, and suddenly, to the great surprise of both, they found nothing more to say, nothing at all.

At this moment Harry and Bella rushed into the room, with cries of joy.

"Monsieur Jean! Are you there? Come and see our ponies!"

"Ah!" said Bettina, her voice a little uncertain, "Edwards has just come back from Paris, and has brought two microscopic ponies for the children. Let us go to see them, shall we?"

They went to see the ponies, which were indeed worthy to figure in the stables of the King of Lilliput.

CHAPTER VIII

ANOTHER MARTYR TO MILLIONS

THREE weeks have glided by; another day and Jean will be obliged to leave with his regiment for the artillery practice. He will lead the life of a soldier. Ten days' march on the highroad going and returning, and ten days in the camp at Cercottes in the forest of Orléans. The regiment will return to Souvigny on the 10th of August.

Jean is no longer tranquil; Jean is no longer happy. He sees approach with impatience, and at the same time with terror, the moment of his departure. With impatience—for he suffers an absolute martyrdom, he longs to escape from it; with terror—for to pass twenty days without seeing her, without speaking to her, without her in a word—what will become of him? Her! It is Bettina; he adores her!

Since when? Since the first day, since that meeting in the month of May in the Curé's garden. That is the truth; but Jean struggles against and resists that truth. He believes that he has only loved Bettina since the day when the two chatted gayly, amicably, in the little drawing-room. She was sitting on the blue couch near the window, and, while talking, amused herself with

repairing the disorder of the dress of a Japanese princess, one of Bella's dolls, which she had left on a chair, and which Bettina had mechanically taken up.

Why had the fancy come to Miss Percival to talk to him of those two young girls whom he might have married? The question of itself was not at all embarrassing to him. He had replied that, if he had not then felt any taste for marriage, it was because his interviews with these two girls had not caused him any emotion or any agitation. He had smiled in speaking thus, but a few minutes after he smiled no more. This emotion, this agitation, he had suddenly learned to know them. Jean did not deceive himself; he acknowledged the depth of the wound; it had penetrated to his very heart's core.

Jean, however, did not abandon himself to this emotion. He said to himself:

"Yes, it is serious, very serious, but I shall recover from it."

He sought an excuse for his madness; he laid the blame on circumstances. For ten days this delightful girl had been too much with him, too much with him alone! How could he resist such a temptation? He was intoxicated with her charm, with her grace and beauty. But the next day a troop of visitors would arrive at Longueval, and there would be an end of this dangerous intimacy. He would have courage; he would keep at a distance; he would lose himself in the crowd, would see Bettina less often and less familiarly. To see her no more was a thought he could not support! He wished to remain Bettina's friend, since he could be nothing but her friend; for there was another

thought which scarcely entered the mind of Jean. This thought did not appear extravagant to him; it appeared monstrous. In the whole world there was not a more honorable man than Jean, and he felt for Bettina's money horror, positively horror.

From the 25th of June the crowd had been in possession of Longueval. Mrs. Norton arrived with her son, Daniel Norton; and Mrs. Turner with her son, Philip Turner. Both of them, the young Philip and the young Daniel, formed a part of the famous brotherhood of the thirty-four. They were old friends, Bettina had treated them as such, and had declared to them, with perfect frankness, that they were losing their time. However, they were not discouraged, and formed the centre of a little court which was always very eager and assiduous around Bettina.

Paul de Lavardens had made his appearance on this scene, and had very rapidly become everybody's friend. He had received the brilliant and complicated education of a young man destined for pleasure. As soon as it was a question only of amusement, riding, croquet, lawn-tennis, polo, dancing, charades, and theatricals, he was ready for everything. He excelled in everything. His superiority was evident, unquestionable. Paul became, in a short time, by general consent, the director and organizer of the *fetes* at Longueval.

Bettina had not a moment of hesitation. Jean introduced Paul de Lavardens, and the latter had scarcely concluded the customary little compliment when Miss Percival, leaning toward her sister, whispered in her ear:

"The thirty-fifth!"

However, she received Paul very kindly, so kindly that for several days he had the weakness to misunderstand her. He believed that it was his personal graces which had obtained for him this very flattering and cordial reception. It was a great mistake. Paul de Lavardens had been introduced by Jean; he was the friend of Jean. In Bettina's eyes, therein lay all his merit.

Mrs. Scott's castle was open house; people were not invited for one evening only, but for every evening, and Paul, with enthusiasm, came every evening! His dream was at last realized; he had found Paris at Longueval.

But Paul was neither blind nor a fool. No doubt he was, on Miss Percival's part, the object of very particular attention and favor. It pleased her to talk long, very long, alone with him. But what was the eternal, the inexhaustible subject of their conversations? Jean, again Jean, and always Jean!

Paul was thoughtless, dissipated, frivolous, but he became in earnest when Jean was in question; he knew how to appreciate him, he knew how to love him. Nothing to him was sweeter, nothing was easier, than to say of the friend of his childhood all the good that he thought of him, and as he saw that Bettina listened with great pleasure, Paul gave free rein to his eloquence.

Only—and he was quite right—Paul wished one evening to reap the benefit of his chivalrous conduct. He had just been talking for a quarter of an hour with Bettina. The conversation finished, he went to look

for Jean at the other end of the drawing-room, and said to him:

"You left the field open to me, and I have made a bold stroke for Miss Percival."

"Well, you have no reason to be discontented with the result of the enterprise. You are the best friends in the world."

"Yes, certainly, pretty well, but not quite satisfactory. There is nothing more amiable or more charming than Miss Percival, and really it is very good of me to acknowledge it; for, between ourselves, she makes me play an ungrateful and ridiculous *role*, a *role* which is quite unsuited to my age. I am, you will admit, of the lover's age, and not of that of the confidant."

"Of the confidant!"

"Yes, my dear fellow, of the confidant! That is my occupation in this house. You were looking at us just now. Oh, I have very good eyes; you were looking at us. Well, do you know what we were talking about? Of you, my dear fellow, of you, of you again, of nothing but you. And it is the same thing every evening; there is no end to the questions:

"'You were brought up together? You took lessons together from the Abbé Constantin?'

"'Will he soon be Captain? And then?'

"'Commandant.'

"'And then?'

"'Colonel, etc., etc., etc.'

"Ah! I can tell you, my friend Jean, if you liked, you might dream a very delicious dream."

Jean was annoyed, almost angry. Paul was much astonished at this sudden attack of irritability.

"What is the matter? Have I said anything——"

"I beg your pardon; I was wrong. But how could you take such an absurd idea into your head?"

"Absurd! I don't see it. I have entertained the absurd idea on my own account."

"Ah! you——"

"Why 'Ah! you?' If I have had it you may have it; you are better worth it than I am."

"Paul, I entreat you!"

Jean's discomfort was evident.

"We will not speak of it again; we will not speak of it again. What I wanted to say, in short, is that Miss Percival perhaps thinks I am agreeable; but as to considering me seriously, that little person will never commit such a folly. I must fall back upon Mrs. Scott, but without much confidence. You see, Jean, I shall amuse myself in this house, but I shall make nothing out of it."

Paul de Lavardens did fall back upon Mrs. Scott, but the next day was surprised to stumble upon Jean, who had taken to placing himself very regularly in Mrs. Scott's particular circle, for like Bettina she had also her little court. But what Jean sought there was a protection, a shelter, a refuge.

The day of that memorable conversation on marriage without love, Bettina had also, for the first time, felt suddenly awake in her that necessity of loving which sleeps, but not very profoundly, in the hearts of all young girls. The sensation had been the same, at the same moment, in the soul of Bettina and the soul of

Jean. He, terrified, had cast it violently from him. She, on the contrary, had yielded, in all the simplicity of her perfect innocence, to this flood of emotion and of tenderness.

She had waited for love. Could this be love? The man who was to be her thought, her life, her soul—could this be he—this Jean? Why not? She knew him better than she knew all those who, during the past year, had haunted her for her fortune, and in what she knew of him there was nothing to discourage the love of a good girl. Far from it!

Both of them did well; both of them were in the way of duty and of truth—she, in yielding; he, in resisting; she, in not thinking for a moment of the obscurity of Jean; he, in recoiling before her mountain of wealth as he would have recoiled before a crime; she, in thinking that she had no right to parley with love; he, in thinking he had no right to parley with honor.

This is why, in proportion as Bettina showed herself more tender, and abandoned herself with more frankness to the first call of love—this is why Jean became, day by day, more gloomy and more restless. He was not only afraid of loving; he was afraid of being loved.

He ought to have remained away; he should not have come near her. He had tried; he could not; the temptation was too strong; it carried him away; so he came. She would come to him, her hands extended, a smile on her lips, and her heart in her eyes. Everything in her said:

"Let us try to love each other, and if we can love, we will!"

Fear seized him. Those two hands which offered themselves to the pressure of his hands, he hardly dared touch them. He tried to escape those eyes which, tender and smiling, anxious and curious, tried to meet his eyes. He trembled before the necessity of speaking to Bettina, before the necessity of listening to her.

It was then that Jean took refuge with Mrs. Scott, and it was then that Mrs. Scott gathered those uncertain, agitated, troubled words which were not addressed to her, and which she took for herself, nevertheless. It would have been difficult not to be mistaken.

For of these still vague and confused sentiments which agitated her, Bettina had as yet said nothing. She guarded and caressed the secret of her budding love, as a miser guards and caresses the first coins of his treasure. The day when she should see clearly into her own heart, the day that she should be sure that she loved—ah! she would speak that day, and how happy she should be to tell all to Susie!

Mrs. Scott had ended by attributing to herself this melancholy of Jean, which, day by day, took a more marked character. She was flattered by it—a woman is never displeased at thinking herself beloved—and vexed at the same time. She held Jean in great esteem, in great affection; but she was greatly distressed at the thought that if he were sad and unhappy, it was because of her.

Susie was, besides, conscious of her own innocence. With others she had sometimes been coquettish, very coquettish. To torment them a little, was that such a great crime? They had nothing to do, they were good-

for-nothing, it occupied them while it amused her. It helped them to pass their time, and it helped her, too. But Susie had not to reproach herself for having flirted with Jean. She recognized his merit and his superiority; he was worth more than the others, he was a man to suffer seriously, and that was what Mrs. Scott did not wish. Already, two or three times, she had been on the point of speaking to him very seriously, very affectionately, but she had reflected Jean was going away for three weeks; on his return, if it were still necessary, she would read him a lecture, and would act in such a manner that love should not come and foolishly interfere in their friendship.

So Jean was to go the next day. Bettina had insisted that he should spend this last day at Longueval, and dine at the house. Jean had refused, alleging that he had much to do the night before his departure.

He arrived in the evening, about half-past ten; he came on foot. Several times on the way he had been inclined to return.

"If I had courage enough," he said to himself, "I would not see her again. I shall leave to-morrow, and return no more to Souvigny while she is there. My resolution is taken, and taken forever."

But he continued his way, he would see her again—for the last time.

As soon as he entered the drawing-room, Bettina hastened to him.

"It is you at last! How late you are!"

"I have been very busy."

"And you are going to-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow."

"Early?"

"At five in the morning."

"You will go by the road which runs by the wall of the park, and goes through the village?"

"Yes, that is the way we shall go."

"Why so early in the morning? I would have gone out on the terrace to see you pass, and to wish you good-by."

Bettina detained for a moment Jean's burning hand in hers. He drew it mournfully away, with an effort.

"I must go and speak to your sister," said he.

"Directly, she has not seen you, there are a dozen persons round her. Come and sit here a little while, near me."

He was obliged to seat himself beside her.

"We are going away, too," said she.

"You!"

"Yes. An hour ago, we received a telegram from my brother-in-law, which has caused us great joy. We did not expect him for a month, but he is coming back in a fortnight. He will embark the day after to-morrow at New York, on board the *Labrador*. We are going to meet him at Havre. We shall also start the day after to-morrow; we are going to take the children, it will do them a great deal of good to spend a few days at the seaside. How pleased my brother-in-law will be to know you—he knows you already, we have spoken of you in all our letters. I am sure you and Mr. Scott will get on extremely well together, he is so good. How long shall you stay away?"

"Three weeks."

"Three weeks in a camp?"

"Yes, Miss Percival, in the camp of Cercottes."

"In the middle of the forest of Orléans. I made your godfather explain all about it to me this morning. Of course I am delighted to go to meet my brother-in-law; but at the same time, I am a little sorry to leave here, for I should have gone every morning to pay a little visit to Monsieur l'Abbé. He would have given me news of you. Perhaps, in about ten days, you will write to my sister—a little note of three or four lines—it will not take much of your time—just to tell her how you are, and that you do not forget us."

"Oh, as to forgetting you, as to losing the remembrance of your extreme kindness, your goodness, never, Miss Percival, never!"

His voice trembled, he was afraid of his own emotion, he rose.

"I assure you, Miss Percival, I must go and speak to your sister. She is looking at me. She must be astonished."

He crossed the room, Bettina followed him with her eyes.

Mrs. Norton had just placed herself at the piano to play a waltz for the young people.

Paul de Lavardens approached Miss Percival.

"Will you do me the honor, Miss Percival?"

"I believe I have just promised this dance to Monsieur Jean," she replied.

"Well, if not to him, will you give it to me?"

"That is understood."

Bettina walked toward Jean, who had seated himself near Mrs. Scott.

"I have just told a dreadful story," said she. "Monsieur de Lavardens has asked me for this dance, and I replied that I had promised it to you. You would like it, wouldn't you?"

To hold her in his arms, to breathe the perfume of her hair—Jean felt his courage could not support this ordeal, he dared not accept.

"I regret extremely I can not, I am not well to-night; I persisted in coming because I would not leave without wishing you good-by, but dance, no, it is impossible!"

Mrs. Norton began the prelude of the waltz.

"Well," said Paul, coming up quite joyful, "who is it to be, he or I?"

"You," she said, sadly, without removing her eyes from Jean.

She was much disturbed, and replied without knowing well what she said. She immediately regretted having accepted, she would have liked to stay there, near him. But it was too late, Paul took her hand and led her away.

Jean rose; he looked at the two, Bettina and Paul, a haze floated before his eyes, he suffered cruelly.

"There is only one thing I can do," thought he, "profit by this waltz, and go. To-morrow I will write a few lines to Mrs. Scott to excuse myself."

He gained the door, he looked no more at Bettina; had he looked, he would have stayed.

But Bettina looked at him; and all at once she said to Paul:

"Thank you very much, but I am a little tired, let us stop, please. You will excuse me, will you not?"

Paul offered his arm.

"No, thank you," said she.

The door was just closing, Jean was no longer there. Bettina ran across the room. Paul remained alone, much surprised, understanding nothing of what had passed.

Jean was already at the hall-door, when he heard some one call—"Monsieur Jean! Monsieur Jean!"

He stopped and turned. She was near him.

"You are going without wishing me good-by?"

"I beg your pardon, I am very tired."

"Then you must not walk home, the weather is threatening"—she extended her hand out-of-doors—"it is raining already."

"Come and have a cup of tea in the little drawing-room, and I will tell them to drive you home," and turning toward one of the footmen, "tell them to send a carriage round directly."

"No, Miss Percival, pray, the open air will revive me. I must walk, let me go."

"Go, then, but you have no greatcoat, take something to wrap yourself in."

"I shall not be cold—while you with that open dress—I shall go to oblige you to go in." And without even offering his hand, he ran quickly down the steps.

"If I touch her hand," he thought, "I am lost, my secret will escape me."

His secret! He did not know that Bettina read his heart like an open book.

When Jean had descended the steps, he hesitated one short moment, these words were upon his lips:

"I love you, I adore you, and that is why I will see you no more!"

But he did not utter these words, he fled away and was soon lost in the darkness.

Bettina remained there against the brilliant background made by the light from the hall. Great drops of rain, driven by the wind, swept across her bare shoulders and made her shiver; she took no notice, she distinctly heard her heart beat.

"I knew very well that he loved me," she thought, "but now I am very sure, that I, too—oh! yes! I, too!——"

All at once, in one of the great mirrors in the hall-door, she saw the reflection of the two footmen who stood there motionless, near the oak table in the hall. Bettina heard bursts of laughter and the strains of the waltz; she stopped. She wished to be alone, completely alone, and addressing one of the servants, she said:

"Go and tell your mistress that I am very tired, and have gone to my own room."

Annie, her maid, had fallen asleep, in an easy-chair. She sent her away. She would undress herself. She let herself sink on a couch, she was oppressed with delicious emotion.

The door of her room opened, it was Mrs. Scott.

"You are not well, Bettina?"

"Oh, Susie, is it you, my Susie? how nice of you to come. Sit here, close to me, quite close to me."

She hid herself like a child in the arms of her sister, caressing with her burning brow Susie's fresh shoulders. Then she suddenly burst into sobs, great sobs, which stifled, suffocated her.

"Bettina, my darling, what is the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing! it is nothing, it is joy—joy!"

"Joy?"

"Yes, yes, wait—let me cry a little, it will do me so much good. But do not be frightened, do not be frightened."

Beneath her sister's caress, Bettina grew calm, soothed.

"It is over, I am better now, and I can talk to you. It is about Jean."

"Jean! You call him Jean?"

"Yes, I call him Jean. Have you not noticed for some time that he was dull and looked quite melancholy?"

"Yes, I have."

"When he came, he went and posted himself near you, and stayed there, silent, absorbed to such a degree, that for several days I asked myself—pardon me for speaking to you with such frankness, it is my way, you know—I asked myself if it were not you whom he loved, Susie; you are so charming, it would have been so natural! But no, it was not you, it was I!"

"You?"

"Yes, I. Listen, he scarcely dared to look at me, he avoided me, he fled from me, he was afraid of me, evidently afraid. Now, in justice, am I a person to inspire fear? I am sure I am not!"

"Certainly not!"

"Ah! it was not I of whom he was afraid, it was my money, my horrid money! This money which attracts all the others and tempts them so much, this money terrifies him, drives him desperate, because he is not like the others, because he——"

"My child, take care, perhaps you are mistaken."

"Oh, no, I am not mistaken! Just now, at the door, when he was going away, he said some words to me. These words were nothing. But if you had seen his distress in spite of all his efforts to control it! Susie, dear Susie, by the affection which I bear you, and God knows how great is that affection, this is my conviction, my absolute conviction—if, instead of being Miss Percival, I had been a poor little girl without a penny Jean would then have taken my hand, and have told me that he loved me, and if he had spoken to me thus, do you know what I should have replied?"

"That you loved him, too?"

"Yes; and that is why I am so happy. With me it is a fixed idea that I must adore the man who will be my husband. Well! I don't say that I adore Jean, no, not yet; but still it is beginning, Susie, and it is beginning so sweetly."

"Bettina, it really makes me uneasy to see you in this state of excitement. I do not deny that Monsieur Reynaud is much attached to you——"

"Oh, more than that, more than that!"

"Loves you, if you like; yes, you are right, you are quite right. He loves you; and are you not worthy, my darling, of all the love that one can bear you? As to

Jean—it is progressing decidedly, here am I also calling him Jean—well! you know what I think of him. I rank him very, very high. But in spite of that, is he really a suitable husband for you?"

"Yes, if I love him."

"I am trying to talk sensibly to you, and you, on the contrary—Understand me, Bettina; I have an experience of the world which you can not have. Sinec our arrival in Paris, we have been launched into a very brilliant, very animated, very aristocratic society. You might have been already, if you had liked, marchioness or princess."

"Yes, but I did not like."

"It would not matter to you to be called Madame Reynaud?"

"Not in the least, if I love him."

"Ah! you return always to——"

"Because that is the true question. There is no other. Now I will be sensible in my turn. This question—I grant that this is not quite settled, and that I have, perhaps, allowed myself to be too easily persuaded. You see how sensible I am. Jean is going away to-morrow, I shall not see him again for three weeks. During these three weeks I shall have ample time to question myself, to examine myself, in a word, to know my own mind. Under my giddy manner, I am serious and thoughtful, you know that?"

"Oh, yes, I know it."

"Well, I will make this petition to you, as I would have addressed it to our mother had she been here. If, in three weeks, I say to you, 'Susie, I am certain that I

love him,' will you allow me to go to him, myself, quite alone, and ask him if he will have me for his wife? That is what you did with Richard. Tell me, Susie, will you allow me?"

"Yes, I will allow you."

Bettina embraced her sister, and murmured these words in her ear:

"Thank you, mamma."

"Mamma, mamma! It was thus that you used to call me when you were a child, when we were alone in the world together, when I used to undress you in our poor room in New York, when I held you in my arms, when I laid you in your little bed, when I sang you to sleep. And since then, Bettina, I have had only one desire in the world, your happiness. That is why I beg you to reflect well. Do not answer me, do not let us talk any more of that. I wish to leave you very calm, very tranquil. You have sent away Annie, would you like me to be your little mamma again to-night, to undress you, and put you to bed as I used to do?"

"Yes, I should like it very much."

"And when you are in bed, you promise me to be very good?"

"As good as an angel."

"You will do your best to go to sleep?"

"My very best."

"Very quietly, without thinking of anything?"

"Very quietly, without thinking of anything."

"Very well, then."

Ten minutes after, Bettina's pretty head rested gently amid embroideries and lace. Susie said to her sister:

"I am going down to those people who bore me dreadfully this evening. Before going to my own room, I shall come back and see if you are asleep. Do not speak. Go to sleep."

She went away. Bettina remained alone; she tried to keep her word; she endeavored to go to sleep, but only half-succeeded. She fell into a half-slumber which left her floating between dream and reality. She had promised to think of nothing, and yet she thought of him, always of him, of nothing but him, vaguely, confusedly.

How long a time passed thus she could not tell.

All at once it seemed to her that some one was walking in her room; she half-opened her eyes, and thought she recognized her sister. In a very sleepy voice she said to her:

"You know I love him."

"Hush! go to sleep."

"I am asleep! I am asleep!"

At last she did fall sound asleep, less profoundly, however, than usual, for about four o'clock in the morning she was suddenly awakened by a noise, which, the night before, would not have disturbed her slumber. The rain fell in torrents, and beat against her window.

"Oh, it is raining!" she thought. "He will get wet."

That was her first thought. She rose, crossed the room barefooted, half-opened the shutters. The day had broke, gray and lowering; the clouds were heavy with rain, the wind blew tempestuously, and drove the rain in gusts before it.

Bettina did not go back to bed, she felt it would be

quite impossible to sleep again. She put on a dressing-gown, and remained at the window; she watched the falling rain. Since he positively must go, she would have liked the weather to be fine; she would have liked bright sunshine to have cheered his first day's march.

When she came to Longueval a month ago, Bettina did not know what this meant. But she knew it now. A day's march for the artillery is twenty or thirty miles, with an hour's halt for luncheon. It was the Abbé Constantin who had taught her that; when going their rounds in the morning among the poor, Bettina overwhelmed the Curé with questions on military affairs, and particularly on the artillery.

Twenty or thirty miles under this pouring rain! Poor Jean! Bettina thought of young Turner, young Norton, of Paul de Lavardens, who would sleep calmly till ten in the morning, while Jean was exposed to this deluge.

Paul de Lavardens!

This name awoke in her a painful memory, the memory of that waltz the evening before. To have danced like that, while Jean was so obviously in trouble! That waltz took the proportions of a crime in her eyes; it was a horrible thing that she had done.

And then, had she not been wanting in courage and frankness in that last interview with Jean? He neither could nor dared say anything; but she might have shown more tenderness, more expansiveness. Sad and suffering as he was, she should never have allowed him to go back on foot. She ought to have detained him at any price. Her imagination tormented and excited her;

Jean must have carried away with him the impression that she was a bad little creature, heartless and pitiless. And in half-an-hour he was going away, away for three weeks. Ah! if she could by any means—but there is a way! The regiment must pass along the wall of the park, under the terrace.

Bettina was seized with a wild desire to see Jean pass; he would understand well, if he saw her at such an hour, that she had come to beg his pardon for her cruelty of the previous evening. Yes, she would go! But she had promised to Susie to be as good as an angel, and to do what she was going to do, was that being as good as an angel? She would make up for it by acknowledging all to Susie when she came in again, and Susie would forgive her.

She would go! She had made up her mind. Only how should she dress herself? She had nothing at hand but a muslin dressing-gown, little high-heeled slippers, and blue satin shoes. She might wake her maid. Oh, never would she dare to do that, and time pressed; a quarter to five! the regiment would start at five o'clock.

She might, perhaps, manage with the muslin dressing-gown, and the satin shoes; in the hall, she might find her hat, her little *sabots* which she wore in the garden, and the large tartan cloak for driving in wet weather. She half-opened her door with infinite precautions. Everything slept in the house; she crept along the corridor, she descended the staircase.

If only the little *sabots* are there in their place; that is her great anxiety. There they are! She slips them

on over her satin shoes, she wraps herself in her great mantle.

She hears that the rain has redoubled in violence. She notices one of those large umbrellas which the footmen use on the box in wet weather; she seizes it; she is ready; but when she is ready to go, she sees that the hall-door is fastened by a great iron bar. She tries to raise it; but the bolt holds fast, resists all her efforts, and the great clock in the hall slowly strikes five. He is starting at that moment.

She will see him! she will see him! Her will is excited by these obstacles. She makes a great effort; the bar yields, slips back in the groove. But Bettina has made a long scratch on her hand, from which issues a slender stream of blood. Bettina twists her handkerchief round her hand, takes her great umbrella, turns the key in the lock, and opens the door.

At last she is out of the house!

The weather is frightful. The wind and the rain rage together. It takes five or six minutes to reach the terrace which looks over the road. Bettina darts forward courageously; her head bent, hidden under her immense umbrella, she has taken a few steps. All at once, furious, mad, blinding, a sudden squall bursts upon Bettina, buries her in her mantle, drives her along, lifts her almost from the ground, turns the umbrella violently inside out; that is nothing, the disaster is not yet complete.

Bettina has lost one of her little *sabots;* they were not practical *sabots;* they were only pretty little things for fine weather, and at this moment, when Bettina strug-

gles against the tempest with her blue satin shoe half buried in the wet gravel, at this moment the wind bears to her the distant echo of a blast of trumpets. It is the regiment starting!

Bettina makes a desperate effort, abandons her umbrella, finds her little *sabot*, fastens it on as well as she can, and starts off running, with a deluge descending on her head.

At last, she is in the wood, the trees protect her a little. Another blast, nearer this time. Bettina fancies she hears the rolling of the gun-carriages. She makes a last effort, there is the terrace, she is there just in time.

Twenty yards off she perceived the white horses of the trumpeters, and along the road caught glimpses, vaguely appearing through the fog, of the long line of guns and wagons.

She sheltered herself under one of the old limes which bordered the terrace. She watched, she waited. He is there among that confused mass of riders. Will she be able to recognize him? And he, will he see her? Will any chance make him turn his head that way?

Bettina knows that he is Lieutenant in the second battery of his regiment; she knows that a battery is composed of six guns, and six ammunition wagons. Of course it is the Abbé Constantin who has taught her that. Thus she must allow the first battery to pass, that is to say, count six guns, six wagons, and then—he will be there.

There he is at last, wrapped in his great cloak, and it is he who sees, who recognizes her first. A few moments before, he had recalled to his mind a long walk

which he had taken with her one evening, when night was falling, on that terrace. He raised his eyes, and the very spot where he remembered having seen her, was the spot where he found her again. He bowed, and, bareheaded in the rain, turning round in his saddle, as long as he could see her, he looked at her. He said again to himself what he had said the previous evening:

"It is for the last time."

With a charming gesture of both hands, she returned his farewell, and this gesture, repeated many times, brought her hands so near, so near her lips, that one might have fancied——

"Ah!" she thought, "if, after that, he does not understand that I love him, and does not forgive me my money!"

CHAPTER IX

THE REWARD OF TENDER COURAGE

IT was the 10th of August, the day which should bring Jean back to Longueval.

Bettina awoke very early, rose, and ran immediately to the window. The evening before, the sky had looked threatening, heavy with clouds. Bettina slept but little, and all nigh prayed that it might not rain the next day.

In the early morning a dense fog enveloped the park of Longueval, the trees of which were hidden from view, as by a curtain. But gradually the rays of the sun dissipated the mist, the trees became vaguely discernible through the vapor; then, suddenly, the sun shone brilliantly, flooding with light the park, and the fields beyond; and the lake, where the black swans were disporting themselves in the radiant light, appeared as bright as a sheet of polished metal.

The weather was going to be beautiful. Bettina was a little superstitious. The sunshine gives her good hope and good courage. "The day begins well, so it will finish well."

Mr. Scott had come home several days before. Susie, Bettina, and the children waited on the quay at Havre for the arrival of his steamer.

They exchanged many tender embraces; then, Richard, addressing his sister-in-law, said, laughingly:

"Well, when is the wedding to be?"

"What wedding?"

"Yours."

"My wedding?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And to whom am I about to be married?"

"To Monsieur Jean Reynaud."

"Ah! Susie has written to you?"

"Susie? Not at all. Susie has not said a word. It is you, Bettina, who have written to me. For the last two months, all your letters have been occupied with this young officer."

"All my letters?"

"Yes, and you have written to me oftener and more at length than usual. I do not complain of that, but I do ask when you are going to present me with a brother-in-law?"

He spoke jestingly, but Bettina replied:

"Soon, I hope."

Mr. Scott perceived that the affair was serious. When returning in the carriage, Bettina asked Mr. Scott if he had kept her letters.

"Certainly," he replied.

She read them again. It was indeed only with "Jean" that all these letters have been filled. She found therein related, down to the most trifling details, their first meeting. There was the portrait of Jean in the vicarage garden, with his straw hat and his earthenware salad-dish

Bettina awoke very early, rose, and ran to the window.

[*From the Original Drawing by Madeleine Lemaire.*]

[illegible] hanged many tender embraces; then, [illegible]

"Well, when is the wedding to be?"

"What wedding?"

"[illegible]"

"My wedding?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And to whom am I about to be married?"

"To Monsieur Jean Reynaud."

"Ah! Susie has written to you?"

"Susie? Not at all. Susie has not said a word. It is you, Bettina, who have written to me. For the last [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] t was indeed only with "Jean" [illegible] filled. She found therein [illegible] details, their first meet-[illegible] an in the vicarage gar-den, with his stra[illegible] his earthenware salad-dish

—and then it was again Monsieur Jean, always Monsieur Jean.

She discovered that she had loved him much longer than she had suspected.

At last it was the 10th of August. Luncheon was just over, and Harry and Bella were impatient. They knew that between one and two o'clock the regiment must pass through the village. They had been promised that they should be taken to see the soldiers pass, and for them, as well as for Bettina, the return of the 9th Artillery was a great event.

"Aunt Betty," said Bella, "Aunt Betty, come with us."

"Yes, do come," said Harry, "do come, we shall see our friend Jean, on his big gray horse."

Bettina resisted, refused—and yet how great was the temptation.

But no, she would not go, she would not see Jean again till the evening, when she would give him that decisive explanation for which she had been preparing herself for the last three weeks.

The children went away with their governesses. Bettina, Susie, and Richard went to sit in the park, quite close to the castle, and as soon as they were established there:

"Susie," said Bettina, "I am going to remind you today of your promise; you remember what passed between us the night of his departure; we settled that if, on the day of his return, I could say to you, 'Susie, I am sure that I love him,' we settled that you would allow me to speak frankly to him, and ask him if he would have me for his wife."

"Yes, I did promise you. But are you very sure?"

"Absolutely—and now the time has come to redeem your promise. I warn you that I intend to bring him to this very place," she added, smiling, "to this seat; and to use almost the same language to him that you formerly used to Richard. You were successful, Susie, you are perfectly happy, and I—that is what I wish to be."

"Richard, Susie has told you about Monsieur Reynaud."

"Yes, and she has told me that there is no man of whom she has a higher opinion, but——"

"But she has told you that for me it would be a rather quiet, rather commonplace marriage. Oh, naughty sister! Will you believe it, Richard, that I can not get this fear out of her head? She does not understand that, before everything, I wish to love and be loved; will you believe it, Richard, that only last week she laid a horrible trap for me? You know that there exists a certain Prince Romanelli."

"Yes, I know you might have been a princess."

"That would not have been immensely difficult, I believe. Well, one day I was so foolish as to say to Susie, that, in extremity, I might accept the Prince Romanelli. Now, just imagine what she did. The Turners were at Trouville, Susie had arranged a little plot. We lunched with the Prince, but the result was disastrous. Accept him! The two hours that I passed with him, I passed in asking myself how I could have said such a thing. No, Richard; no, Susie; I will be neither princess, nor marchioness, nor countess. My wish is to be Madame

Jean Reynaud; if, however, Monsieur Jean Reynaud will agree to it, and that is by no means certain."

The regiment entered the village, and suddenly military music burst martial and joyous across the space. All three remained silent, it was the regiment, it was Jean who passed; the sound became fainter, died away, and Bettina continued:

"No, that is not certain. He loves me, however, and much, but without knowing well what I am; I think that I deserve to be loved differently; I think that I should not cause him so much terror, so much fear, if he knew me better, and that is why I ask you to permit me to speak to him this evening freely, from my heart."

"We will allow you," replied Richard, "you shall speak to him freely, for we know, both of us, Bettina, that you will never do anything that is not noble and generous."

"At least, I shall try."

The children ran up to them; they had seen Jean, he was quite white with dust, he said good-morning to them.

"Only," added Bella, "he is not very nice, he did not stop to talk to us; usually he stops, but this time he wouldn't."

"Yes, he would," replied Harry, "for at first he seemed as if he were going to—and then he would not, he went away."

"Well, he didn't stop, and it is so nice to talk to a soldier, especially when he is on horseback."

"It is not that only, it is that we are very fond of Mon-

sieur Jean; if you knew, papa, how kind he is, and how nicely he plays with us."

"And what beautiful drawings he makes. Harry, you remember that great Punch who was so funny, with his stick, you know?"

"And the dog, there was the little dog, too, as in the show."

The two children went away talking of their friend Jean.

"Decidedly," said Mr. Scott, "every one likes him in this house."

"And you will be like every one else when you know him," replied Bettina.

The regiment broke into a trot along the highroad, after leaving the village. There was the terrace where Bettina had been the other morning. Jean said to himself:

"Supposing she should be there."

He dreaded and hoped it at the same time. He raised his head, he looked, she was not there.

He had not seen her again, he would not see her again, for a long time at least. He would start that very evening at six o'clock for Paris; one of the personages in the War Office was interested in him; he would try to get exchanged into another regiment.

Alone at Cercottes, Jean had had time to reflect deeply, and that was the result of his reflections. He could not, he must not, be Bettina Percival's husband.

The men dismounted at the barracks, Jean took leave of his Colonel, his comrades; all was over. He was free, he could go.

But he did not go; he looked around him. How happy he was three months ago, when he rode out of that great yard amid the noise of the cannon rolling over the pavement of Souvigny; but how sadly he should ride away to-day! Formerly his life was there; where would it be hereafter?

He returned, went to his own room, and wrote to Mrs. Scott; he told her that his duties obliged him to leave immediately, he could not dine at the castle, and begged Mrs. Scott to remember him to Miss Bettina. Bettina, ah! what trouble it cost him to write that name. He closed his letter; he would send it directly.

He made his preparations for departure; then he went to wish his godfather farewell. That is what cost him most; he must speak to him only of a short absence.

He opened one of the drawers of his bureau to take out some money. The first thing that met his eyes was a little note on bluish paper; it was the only note which he had ever received from her.

"Will you have the kindness to give to the servant the book of which you spoke yesterday evening. Perhaps it will be a little serious for me, but yet I should like to try to read it. We shall see you to-night; come as early as possible." It was signed "Bettina."

Jean read and re-read these few lines, but soon he could read them no longer, his eyes were dim.

"It is all that is left me of her," he thought.

At the same moment the Abbé Constantin was tête-à-tête with old Pauline, they were making up their accounts. The financial situation was admirable; more than 2,000 francs in hand! And the wishes of Susie and

Bettina were accomplished, there were no more poor in the neighborhood. His old servant, Pauline, had even occasional scruples of conscience.

"You see, Monsieur le Curé," said she, "perhaps we give them a little too much. Then it will be spread about in other parishes that here they can always find charity. And do you know what will happen then, one of these days? Poor people will come and settle in Longueval."

The Curé gave fifty francs to Pauline. She went to take them to a poor man who had broken his arm a few days before, by falling from the top of a hay-cart.

The Abbé Constantin remained alone in the vicarage. He was rather anxious. He had watched for the passing of the regiment; but Jean only stopped for a moment, he looked sad. For some time, the Abbé had noticed that Jean had no longer the flow of good-humor and gayety he once possessed.

The Curé did not disturb himself too much about it, believing it to be one of those little youthful troubles which did not concern a poor old priest. But, on this occasion, Jean's disturbance was very perceptible.

"I will come back directly," he said to the Curé, "I want to speak to you."

He turned abruptly away. The Abbé Constantin had not even had time to give Loulou his piece of sugar, or rather his pieces of sugar, for he had put five or six in his pocket, considering that Loulou had well deserved this feast by ten long days' march, and a score of nights passed under the open sky.

Besides, since Mrs. Scott had lived at Longueval,

Loulou had very often had several pieces of sugar; the Abbé Constantin had become extravagant, prodigal; he felt himself a millionaire, the sugar for Loulou was one of his follies. One day, even, he had been on the point of addressing to Loulou his everlasting little speech:

"This comes from the new mistresses of Longueval; pray for them to-night."

It was three o'clock when Jean arrived at the vicarage, and the Curé said, immediately:

"You told me that you wanted to speak to me; what is it about?"

"About something, my dear godfather, which will surprise you, will grieve you——"

"Grieve me!"

"Yes, and which grieves me, too—I have come to bid you farewell."

"Farewell! you are going away?"

"Yes, I am going away."

"When?"

"To-day, in two hours."

"In two hours? But, my dear boy, you were going to dine at the castle to-night."

"I have just written to Mrs. Scott to excuse me. I am positively obliged to go."

"Directly?"

"Directly."

"And where are you going?"

"To Paris."

"To Paris! Why this sudden determination?"

"Not so very sudden! I have thought about it for a long time."

"And you have said nothing about it to me! Jean, something has happened. You are a man, and I have no longer the right to treat you as a child; but you know how much I love you; if you have vexations, troubles, why not tell them to me? I could perhaps advise you. Jean, why go to Paris?"

"I did not wish to tell you, it will give you pain; but you have the right to know. I am going to Paris to ask to be exchanged into another regiment."

"Into another regiment! To leave Souvigny!"

"Yes, that is just it; I must leave Souvigny for a short time, for a little while only; but to leave Souvigny is necessary, it is what I wish above all things."

"And what about me, Jean, do you not think of me? A little while! A little while! But that is all that remains to me of life, a little while. And during these last days, that I owe to the grace of God, it was my happiness, yes, Jean, my happiness, to feel you here, near me, and now you are going away! Jean, wait a little patiently, it can not be for very long now for. Wait until the good God has called me to himself, wait till I shall be gone, to meet there, at his side, your father and your mother. Do not go, Jean, do not go."

"If you love me, I love you, too, and you know it well."

"Yes, I know it."

"I have just the same affection for you now that I had when I was quite little, when you took me to yourself, when you brought me up. My heart has not changed, will never change. But if duty—if honor—oblige me to go?"

"Ah, if it is duty, if it is honor, I say nothing more, Jean, that stands before all!—all!—all! I have always known you a good judge of your duty, your honor. Go, my boy, go, I ask you nothing more, I wish to know no more."

"But I wish to tell you all," cried Jean, vanquished by his emotion, "and it is better that you should know all. You will stay here, you will return to the castle, you will see her again—her!"

"See her! Who?"

"Bettina!"

"Bettina?"

"I adore her, I adore her!"

"Oh, my poor boy!"

"Pardon me for speaking to you of these things; but I tell you as I would have told my father."

"And then, I have not been able to speak of it to any one, and it stifled me; yes, it is a madness which has seized me, which has grown upon me, little by little, against my will, for you know very well— My God! It was here that I began to love her. You know, when she came here with her sister—with the little *rouleaux* of francs—her hair fell down—and then the evening, the month of Mary! Then I was permitted to see her freely, familiarly, and you, yourself, spoke to me constantly of her. You praised her sweetness, her goodness. How often have you told me that there was no one in the world better than she is!"

"And I thought it, and I think it still. And no one here knows her better than I do, for it is I alone who have seen her with the poor. If you only knew how

tender, and how good she is! Neither wretchedness nor suffering repulse her. But, my dear boy, I am wrong to tell you all this."

"No, no, I will see her no more, I promise you; but I like to hear you speak of her."

"In your whole life, Jean, you will never meet a better woman, nor one who has more elevated sentiments. To such a point, that one day—she had taken me with her in an open carriage, full of toys—she was taking these toys to a poor sick little girl, and when she gave them to her, to make the poor little thing laugh, to amuse her, she talked so prettily to her that I thought of you, and I said to myself, I remember it now, 'Ah, if she were poor!' "

"Ah! if she were poor, but she is not."

"Oh, no! But what can you do, my poor child! If it gives you pain to see her, to live near her; above all, if it will prevent you suffering—go, go—and yet, and yet——"

The old priest became thoughtful, let his head fall between his hands, and remained silent for some moments; then he continued:

"And yet, Jean, do you know what I think? I have seen a great deal of Mademoiselle Bettina since she came to Longueval. Well—when I reflect—it did not astonish me that any one should be interested in you, for it seemed so natural—but she talked always, yes, always of you."

"Of me?"

"Yes, of you, and of your father and mother; she was curious to know how you lived. She begged me to ex-

plain to her what a soldier's life was, the life of a true soldier, who loved his profession, and performed his duties conscientiously.

"It is extraordinary, since you have told me this, recollections crowd upon me, a thousand little things collect and group themselves together. They returned from Havre yesterday at three o'clock. Well! an hour after their arrival she was here. And it was of you of whom she spoke directly. She asked if you had written to me, if you had not been ill, when you would arrive, at what hour, if the regiment would pass through the village?"

"It is useless at this moment, my dear godfather," said Jean, "to recall all these memories."

"No, it is not useless. She seemed so pleased, so happy even, that she should see you again! She would make quite a *fete* of the dinner this evening. She would introduce you to her brother-in-law, who has come back. There is no one else in the house at this moment, not a single visitor. She insisted strongly on this point, and I remember her last words—she was there, on the threshold of the door:

" 'There will be only five of us,' she said, 'you and Monsieur Jean, my sister, my brother-in-law, and myself.'

"And then she added, laughing, 'Quite a family party.'

"With these words she went, she almost ran away. Quite a family party! Do you know what I think, Jean? Do you know?"

"You must not think that, you must not."

"Jean, I believe that she loves you."

"And I believe it, too."

"You, too!"

"When I left her, three weeks ago, she was so agitated, so moved! She saw me sad and unhappy, she would not let me go. It was at the door of the castle. I was obliged to tear myself, yes, literally tear myself away. I should have spoken, burst out, told her all. After I had gone a few steps, I stopped and turned. She could no longer see me, I was lost in the darkness; but I could see her. She stood there motionless, her shoulders and arms bare, in the rain, her eyes fixed on the way by which I had gone. Perhaps I am mad to think that. Perhaps it was only a feeling of pity. But no, it was something more than pity, for do you know what she did the next morning? She came at five o'clock, in the most frightful weather, to see me pass with the regiment—and then—the way she bade me adieu—oh, my friend, my dear old friend!"

"But then," said the poor Curé, completely bewildered, completely at a loss, "but then, I do not understand you at all. If you love her, Jean, and if she loves you?"

"But that is, above all, the reason why I must go. If it were only I, if I were certain that she has not perceived my love, certain that she has not been touched by it, I would stay, I would stay—for nothing but for the sweet joy of seeing her, and I would love her from afar, without any hope, for nothing but the happiness of loving her. But no, she has understood too well, and far from discouraging me—that is what forces me to go."

"No, I do not understand it! I know well, my poor boy, we are speaking of things in which I am no great scholar, but you are both good, young, and charming; you love her, she would love you, and you will not!"

"And her money! her money!"

"What matters her money? If it is only that, is it because of her money that you have loved her? It is rather in spite of her money. Your conscience, my son, would be quite at peace with regard to that, and that would suffice."

"No, that would not suffice. To have a good opinion of one's self is not enough; that opinion must be shared by others."

"Oh, Jean! Among all who know you, who can doubt you?"

"Who knows? And then there is another thing besides this question of money, another thing more serious and more grave. I am not the husband suited to her."

"And who could be more worthy than you?"

"The question to be considered is not my worth; we have to consider what she is and what I am, to ask what ought to be her life, and what ought to be my life."

"One day, Paul—you know he has rather a blunt way of saying things, but that very bluntness often places thoughts much more distinctly before us—Paul was speaking of her; he did not suspect anything; if he had, he is good-natured, he would not have spoken thus—well, he said to me:

" 'What she needs is a husband who would be entirely devoted to her, to her alone, a husband who would

have no other care than to make her existence a perpetual holiday, a husband who would give himself, his whole life, in return for her money.'

"You know me; such a husband I can not, I must not be. I am a soldier, and shall remain one. If the chances of my career sent me some day to a garrison in the depths of the Alps, or in some almost unknown village in Algeria, could I ask her to follow me? Could I condemn her to the life of a soldier's wife, which is in some degree the life of a soldier himself? Think of the life which she leads now, of all that luxury, of all those pleasures!"

"Yes," said the Abbé, "that is more serious than the question of money."

"So serious that there is no hesitation possible. During the three weeks that I passed alone in the camp, I have well considered all that; I have thought of nothing else, and loving her as I do love, the reason must indeed be strong which shows me clearly my duty. I must go, I must go far, very far away, as far as possible. I shall suffer much, but I must not see her again! I must not see her again!"

Jean sank on a chair near the fireplace. He remained there quite overpowered with his emotion. The old priest looked at him.

"To see you suffer, my poor boy! That such suffering should fall upon you! It is too cruel, too unjust!"

At that moment some one knocked gently at the door.

"Ah!" said the Curé, "do not be afraid, Jean. I will send them away."

The Abbé went to the door, opened it, and recoiled as if before an unexpected apparition.

It was Bettina. In a moment she had seen Jean, and going direct to him:

"You!" cried she. "Oh, how glad I am!"

He rose. She took his hands, and addressing the Curé, she said:

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur le Curé, for going to him first. You, I saw yesterday, and him, not for three whole weeks, not since a certain night, when he left our house, sad and suffering."

She still held Jean's hands. He had neither power to make a movement nor to utter a sound.

"And now," continued Bettina, "are you better? No, not yet, I can see, still sad. Ah, I have done well to come! It was an inspiration! However, it embarrasses me a little, it embarrasses me a great deal, to find you here. You will understand why when you know what I have come to ask of your godfather."

She relinquished his hands, and turning toward the Abbé, said:

'I have come to beg you to listen to my confession—yes, my confession. But do not go away, Monsieur Jean; I will make my confession publicly. I am quite willing to speak before you, and now I think of it, it will be better thus. Let us sit down, shall we?"

She felt herself full of confidence and daring. She burned with fever, but with that fever which, on the field of battle, gives to a soldier ardor, heroism, and disdain of danger. The emotion which made Bettina's heart

beat quicker than usual was a high and generous emotion. She said to herself:

"I will be loved! I will love! I will be happy! I will make him happy! And since he has not sufficient courage to do it, I must have it for both. I must march alone, my head high, and my heart at ease, to the conquest of our love, to the conquest of our happiness!"

From her first words Bettina had gained over the Abbé and Jean a complete ascendancy. They let her say what she liked, they let her do as she liked, they felt that the hour was supreme; they understood that what was happening would be decisive, irrevocable, but neither was in a position to foresee.

They sat down obediently, almost automatically; they waited, they listened. Alone, of the three, Bettina retained her composure. It was in a calm and even voice that she began.

"I must tell you first, Monsieur le Curé, to set your conscience quite at rest, I must tell you that I am here with the consent of my sister and my brother-in-law. They know why I have come; they know what I am about to do. They not only know, but they approve. That is settled, is it not? Well, what brings me here is your letter, Monsieur Jean, that letter in which you tell my sister that you can not dine with us this evening, and that you are positively obliged to leave here. This letter has unsettled all my plans. I had intended, this evening—of course with the permission of my sister and brother-in-law—I had intended, after dinner, to take you into the park, to seat myself with you on a bench; I was childish enough to choose the place beforehand.

There I should have delivered a little speech, well prepared, well studied, almost learned by heart, for since your departure I have scarcely thought of anything else; I repeat it to myself from morning to night. That is what I had proposed to do, and you understand that your letter caused me much embarrassment. I reflected a little, and thought that if I addressed my little speech to your godfather it would be almost the same as if I addressed it to you. So I have come, Monsieur le Curé, to beg you to listen to me."

"I will listen to you, Miss Percival," stammered the Abbé.

"I am rich, Monsieur le Curé, I am very rich, and to speak frankly I love my wealth very much—yes, very much. To it I owe the luxury which surrounds me, luxury which, I acknowledge—it is a confession—is by no means disagreeable to me. My excuse is that I am still very young; it will perhaps pass as I grow older, but of that I am not very sure. I have another excuse; it is, that if I love money a little for the pleasure that it procures me, I love it still more for the good which it allows me to do. I love it—selfishly, if you like—for the joy of giving, but I think that my fortune is not very badly placed in my hands. Well, Monsieur le Curé, in the same way that you have the care of souls, it seems that I have the care of money. I have always thought, 'I wish, above all things, that my husband should be worthy of sharing this great fortune. I wish to be very sure that he will make a good use of it with me while I am here, and after me, if I must leave this world first.' I thought of another thing; I thought, 'He who will be

my husband must be some one I can love!' And now, Monsieur le Curé, this is where my confession really begins. There is a man, who for the last two months, has done all he can to conceal from me that he loves me; but I do not doubt that this man loves me. You do love me, Jean?"

"Yes," said Jean, in a low voice, his eyes cast down, looking like a criminal, "I do love you!"

"I knew it very well, but I wanted to hear you say it, and now I entreat you, do not utter a single word. Any words of yours would be useless, would disturb me, would prevent me from going straight to my aim, and telling you what I positively intend to say. Promise me to stay there, sitting still, without moving, without speaking. You promise me?"

"I promise you."

Bettina, as she went on speaking, began to lose a little of her confidence, her voice trembled slightly. She continued, however, with a gayety that was a little forced:

"Monsieur le Curé, I do not blame you for what has happened, yet all this is a little your fault."

"My fault!"

"Ah! do not speak, not even you. Yes, I repeat it, your fault. I am certain that you have spoken well of me to Jean, much too well. Perhaps, without that, he would not have thought— And at the same time you have spoken very well of him to me. Not too well—no, no—but yet very well! Then, I had so much confidence in you, that I began to look at him, and examine him with a little more attention. I began to

compare him with those who, during the last year, had asked my hand. It seemed to me that he was in every respect superior to them.

"At last, it happened, on a certain day, or rather on a certain evening—three weeks ago, the evening before you left here, Jean—I discovered that I loved you. Yes, Jean, I love you! I entreat you, do not speak; stay where you are; do not come near me.

"Before I came here, I thought I had supplied myself with a good stock of courage, but you see I have no longer my fine composure of a minute ago. But I have still something to tell you, and the most important of all. Jean, listen to me well; I do not wish for a reply torn from your emotion; I know that you love me. If you marry me, I do not wish it to be only for love; I wish it to be also for reason. During the fortnight before you left here, you took so much pains to avoid me, to escape any conversation, that I have not been able to show myself to you as I am. Perhaps there are in me certain qualities which you do not suspect.

"Jean, I know what you are, I know to what I should bind myself in marrying you, and I should be for you not only the loving and tender woman, but the courageous and constant wife. I know your entire life; your godfather has related it to me. I know why you became a soldier; I know what duties, what sacrifices, the future may demand from you. Jean, do not suppose that I shall turn you from any of these duties, from any of these sacrifices. If I could be disappointed with you for anything, it would be, perhaps, for this thought—oh, you must have had it!—that I should wish you free,

and quite my own, that I should ask you to abandon your career. Never! never! Understand well, I shall never ask such a thing of you.

"A young girl whom I know did that when she married, and she did wrong. I love you, and I wish you to be just what you are. It is because you live differently from, and better than, those who have before desired me for a wife, that I desire you for a husband. I should love you less—perhaps I should not love you at all, though that would be very difficult—if you were to begin to live as all those live whom I would not have. When I can follow you, I will follow you; wherever you are will be my duty, wherever you are will be my happiness. And if the day comes when you can not take me, the day when you must go alone, well! Jean, on that day, I promise you to be brave, and not take your courage from you.

"And now, Monsieur le Curé, it is not to him, it is to you that I am speaking; I want *you* to answer me, not him. Tell me, if he loves me, and feels me worthy of his love, would it be just to make me expiate so severely the fortune that I possess? Tell me, should he not agree to be my husband?"

"Jean," said the old priest, gravely, "marry her. It is your duty, and it will be your happiness!"

Jean approached Bettina, took her in his arms, and pressed upon her brow the first kiss.

Bettina gently freed herself, and addressing the Abbé, said:

"And now, Monsieur l'Abbé, I have still one thing to ask you. I wish—I wish——"

"You wish?"

"Pray, Monsieur le Curé, embrace me, too."

The old priest kissed her paternally on both cheeks, and then Bettina continued:

"You have often told me, Monsieur le Curé, that Jean was almost like your own son, and I shall be almost like your own daughter, shall I not? So you will have two children, that is all."

. . . . . .

A month after, on the 12th of September, at mid-day, Bettina, in the simplest of wedding-gowns, entered the church of Longueval, while, placed behind the altar, the trumpets of the 9th Artillery rang joyously through the arches of the old church.

Nancy Turner had begged for the honor of playing the organ on this solemn occasion, for the poor little harmonium had disappeared; an organ, with resplendent pipes, rose in the gallery of the church—it was Miss Percival's wedding present to the Abbé Constantin.

The old Curé said mass, Jean and Bettina knelt before him, he pronounced the benediction, and then remained for some moments in prayer, his arms extended, calling down, with his whole soul, the blessings of Heaven on his two children.

Then floated from the organ the same reverie of Chopin's which Bettina had played the first time that she had entered that little village church, where was to be consecrated the happiness of her life.

And this time it was Bettina who wept.

MADEMOISELLE DUVAL

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March 10, 1884, 2 A.M.

ELL, what do you think of him?"

It was only a moment before; mamma and I were just coming away from a ball at the Martin-Bouchards', the big iron-merchant in the Rue Amelot. The ball had been given in honor of their eldest daughter, Charlotte, who had just married a shirt manufacturer, enormously rich and frightfully common. Hence these festivities, which included all the notabilities of the smelting and calico-printing world.

We had entered the carriage. Pierre, having closed the door, had not had time to get upon the box when mamma, with a voice half-choked by the intensity of her feelings, addressed to me the time-honored phrase, "Well, what do you think of him?"

To which I artlessly replied, "Of whom, mamma?"

"That young man."

Then I, still more artlessly, "What young man, mamma?"

"My dear, you know perfectly well of whom I am speaking."

I did, of course. It was evidently a question of a blond youth who had been presented to me by Madame

Marquesson, a most inveterate matchmaker, who had tried her hand on me more than once.

From ten in the evening until one in the morning this gentleman had divided his attentions between mamma and myself, overwhelming me with invitations to dance, and wrenching from me, in spite of myself, a waltz and two quadrilles; then, when I succeeded in breaking away from him, he attached himself to mamma, who beamed upon him and seemed charmed with his eloquence.

I had my suspicions of this red-haired young person. They always enrage me, these youths who are so wonderfully attentive to mamma. This one had only to show himself to exasperate me.

However, continuing my *role* of *ingênue*, I replied, "I haven't the least idea whom you mean."

"The young man with whom you danced the last quadrille." And thereupon mamma began, and with the greatest enthusiasm proceeded, to give me the history of this young man and his family. His father, a magistrate of the highest integrity; his mother, a most saintly woman who had devoted herself to her children, for this youth has two sisters, charming girls, both married, one to a delightful notary and the other to a no less delightful doctor. And as to him, why, he is apparently the eighth wonder of the world—merit, wisdom, and goodness personified; very intelligent, adoring his mother, and (oh, unanswerable recommendation) graduated head of his class at the *Ecole Centrale!*

I could not restrain a movement of impatience as I began my reply: "An engineer, then; never, mamma,

never! I have already refused seven or eight of them, all graduates either of the *Ecole Centrale* or the *Polytechniqne*, all handsome as possible, all marvels of merit, and if any more present themselves I shall refuse them without taking the trouble to look at them; so remember that, and do stop tormenting me so; it has become a veritable persecution, mamma, and I am sick to death of it."

I had not reached the end of this tirade before mamma and I were in each other's arms, both of us in tears, I in despair, mamma quite upset; she is so good; if it were not for this craze of marrying me to an engineer mamma would be simply perfect.

Never was there such a ridiculous scene in a landau at such an hour, and in the midst of our tears we exchanged a series of interjections.

"My dear child, you know how much I love you!"

"Oh, mamma, I know it, but not an engineer."

"I only wish for your happiness."

"But not an engineer!"

"Well, well! just as you say."

We made up, naturally, mamma and I, and she has promised not to allude again to the hero of our conversation.

And yet I feel discouraged. I can not escape from my destiny. I may fight against it, but I foresee that I shall succumb at last to one of the graduates of the *Ecole Centrale* or the *Polytechnique* who really haunt my footsteps.

At this moment I hear steps resounding under my window in the silence of the night. It is some engineer,

I know, or a chemist, for there are chemists among them also.

March 11th.

And why is mamma so soft-hearted toward all those scientific young persons who pursue me thus? It is on account of my brother, a lazy little wretch, but amusing to the last degree, and whom I adore, which said brother has as strong an objection to work as he has fondness for pleasure, and I am sure I don't blame him.

Octave is now twenty-three years old; for nineteen of these years he has been the despair of papa and mamma. At the age of four the alphabet was placed before him and he was gently invited to learn his letters, upon which he promptly began to howl, his tears mingled with the words, "I don't want to work, I want to amuse myself," and from that day to this he has not changed his mind.

When papa, in order to give him an insight into the business, wished to immure him in the office from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon, Octave rebelled. He declared that he did not, and never should, understand anything whatever about the manufacture and sale of paper; that he should only make innumerable mistakes if he undertook to do anything, and that it would be far better for the business if he were to keep out of it.

And his resistance was so strong, his indolence so persistent, that papa had to give in and content himself with meekly paying Octave's debts; hence sundry storms, but as there is no one kinder than papa, unless it be mamma, that was finally arranged.

Papa is really very rich, there is no doubt about it. When Octave first began his extravagances, he suddenly discovered that there were sundry people disputing as to who should have the honor of lending him money, whereupon he said to me: "You see, Catherine, we can be perfectly easy; papa has plenty of money; I have no difficulty in borrowing all I want at very easy rates. That looks well."

And last December, when papa was obliged to pay at one fell sweep fifty thousand francs, Octave said to me: "He certainly did kick, but the fact that he did not kick more only goes to prove that he must be deucedly rich; he has millions behind him, Catherine, and you and I can amuse ourselves."

So Octave has devoted himself to making papa's money fly, and as he has plainly demonstrated that he will never amount to anything, that he will never be able to conduct the business, that he can never direct the works in Angoulême or the mills at Besançon, why, I must sacrifice myself. It is not I that am to be married, but the business: who bids for the great Duval paper-mills with Mademoiselle Duval thrown in? A young person not very ugly nor very much of a fool; at least, that is my opinion.

And I must, I suppose, like a good, obedient, stupid child, accept with my eyes closed the first man that comes along who knows how to work our machinery and run our mills. No, a thousand times, no! Octave contrives to amuse himself, and why should not I?

March 12th.

I wonder how much papa is worth? What is my dowry to be? That is what I should like to know, but how can I ask mamma such a question? I certainly do not lack coolness, and yet for the life of me I dare not ask her that.

I remember perfectly well when I was a little girl papa and mamma often talked business before me. I would be in the corner playing with my doll, and they did not think I heard them, but I did.

Papa often amused himself by making calculations on big sheets of paper, and mamma would say, with admiration: "As much as that? Is it possible?" They did not mention the sum, but I understood that it was a large one, and then papa would take me on his lap and say, "This little girl will have enough to buy bread and butter with."

But since "this little girl" has grown up there are no calculations made on paper before her. Once in a while papa lets something slip which shows that it would not be difficult for him to give me a really enormous dowry if the fancy took him, but whenever he makes any of these little remarks mamma pricks up her ears, and with a slight movement of her eyes warns him that he must not speak of such things before me; it might give me luxurious ideas.

Poor mamma! if she only knew how long I have had such ideas! Ever since I was a small child. I was then just what I am now; people don't change, they develop. I loved to make a sensation, and I usually did, for I had (and still have) magnificent eyes. As to the in-

stinct of luxury, I always had it; money never stays with me long, and as a child I preferred the toys that cost much money and broke quickly.

But clothes were always my passion, I admit it. Once when I was six or seven years old papa asked me what I should like for my birthday, and I at once replied:

"Oh, give me a red dress so that people will look at me in the street."

I always hated to see my little friends better dressed than myself. I hate it still, but it is a grief I frequently experience.

Mamma's intelligence is above the ordinary, and yet she never has known what a real dressmaker can do, what a costume may be; she doesn't even suspect it. She puts on whatever any one makes for her and considers herself dressed; when I beg and implore her upon my knees at least to allow me to go to a dressmaker who will make the very best possible of me, mamma replies that she will never leave Madame Saillard. And why? Ah, that is a question of sentiment. Madame Saillard made mamma's wedding-gown, and mamma has been so happy ever since she wore it.

For no marriage has ever been happier than that of papa and mamma; in six months they will celebrate their silver wedding, and after a quarter of a century there is still the same affection, the same tenderness. Marguerite, my old nurse, has often told me the story of mamma's marriage.

Nothing could be more touching. Grandpapa, who was even then very rich, wanted papa to marry the

daughter of a notary who had a dowry of a hundred thousand francs but papa preferred mamma, who was pretty, poor, and was his cousin, just as in the English novels, and finally love triumphed (as it does in the novels), but only after two long years of struggling and trials, during which time papa heroically refused all the rich matches proposed to him by grandpapa. He would only marry mamma, and he finally did marry her, and they have been perfectly happy, and would be still more so if they did not happen to have a son who was too fond of pleasure and a daughter who was not sufficiently fond of engineers.

Papa lives only for the business, and mamma lives for him; the business goes on well, papa goes on well, everything goes on well. Life continues in this house as it has for the last fifty years. In the drawing-room are the same old mahogany armchairs that have stood against the wall ever since the first Empire—a terrible species of furniture, ugly, comfortless, indestructible; once I tried to break one of the chairs and I could not. We do have a good cook; it is our one luxury, but papa likes a good table, and when he has been working hard all day he enjoys a good dinner; as to mamma, she has not even that fault, she could dine cheerfully upon bread and potatoes; but she likes to see papa eat, that is enough for her.

Mamma is not avaricious, that would be a fault, and she is perfect, but she really does not enjoy spending money, except for her poor: that is a joy to her. Quite lately she gave thirty thousand francs to build an addition to an orphanage for girls in the Faubourg St. An-

toine, and said nothing about it; it was Octave who got hold of it, and on that occasion he held forth very sensibly to me.

"It is really unreasonable of papa," he said, "to be willing to allow me only fifteen thousand francs a year; he might surely do as much for me as for the orphans in the Rue St. Antoine. If I had forty thousand francs a year, with that and bezique I could make both ends meet, for I always win at bezique. But fifteen thousand francs, what does that amount to? It is absolute poverty; then I have to borrow at ten or twelve per cent., which is not high as times go: papa's name must inspire great confidence; only, you see it is he who ultimately pays both principal and interest, not I, so he really would economize by giving me forty thousand a year. I tried to explain that to mamma, but I could not make her understand. You know mamma; fifteen thousand francs seems an enormous sum to her. I am sure she thinks I ought to save out of that."

Octave is really very sensible sometimes.

"Papa is really enormously rich," he continued; "I learned the other day that three years ago a banker offered him eight million francs, cash down, for the business, shops, mills, water-power, materials, buildings, everything as it stands, and papa would not take it; that means that it is worth more than half a million a year to him; and as papa never spends anything, that means that some day you and I will have six or seven millions: forty thousand francs a year would be nothing to him, and if I have it you ought to have it too.

You ought to ride more; if papa only did the square thing, instead of haggling at Tattersall's for some wretched screw at fifty louis I would go straight to London and bring back two beauties, one for you and one for me. You would be a stunner in a riding-habit; you really are very fetching; I say so and I know what I am talking about. If you only had a decent dressmaker (and I could tell you of one or two) there wouldn't be a prettier girl in Paris.

"It is slow for you; you ought to be married, and mamma's pet engineers don't tempt you in the least, so you send them packing, and quite right too; it really is not fair to condemn you to marry an engineer because I am not up to running the mills. I know the sort of husband you want and the sort of one you ought to have; but mamma will never find him for you, I shall have to do that. With your figure and your fortune we need not make the tour of the Bois before we should have any number of titled young men after us, dying to exchange the half of that title for the half of papa's millions, and I should not be sorry to have a brother-in-law who was one of the leaders in society. But you could not make mamma and papa understand our views; they have been happy living in a certain way, and they are convinced that that is the only way for us to be happy: there is no use in being vexed about it, but we must stand firm."

That was just my idea, but it was a pleasure to find that Octave agreed with me so perfectly.

But how does it happen that Octave and I are so different from papa and mamma? Papa so fond of work

and Octave of pleasure! Mamma so quiet and tranquil, I so nervous, so easily agitated!

Octave says that papa and mamma are of their time and we of ours; that they are no longer in the movement of things, as it were, and we are full of it, and we are right; he even goes further, and says it is our duty to help back into circulation a part of the money amassed in the business. Let us try, then, to fulfil this duty as well as possible.

March 22d.

Every morning papa gets three or four newspapers; he just glances over them, it doesn't take him a quarter of an hour, and then they go into the waste-paper basket; so now and again during the day, when papa is not there, I rummage in the basket. It is very wrong, I know, for mamma does not want me to read the newspapers, and she is quite right: there are things in the papers that are really dreadful, but whenever I come across them I skip them at once without even trying to understand them.

What I do read with avidity is everything that tells me about Paris, the real Paris, which begins in the neighborhood of the Opéra and ends near the Arc de l'Etoile—what a distance from us! Rue Pavée, Le Marais; there I was born, there I live, and there I am slowly expiring, in our old house with the paper-mills next door; I might as well be in the provinces. When I drive out with mamma it is a perfect journey before we get to the shops, but when we reach the Rue de la Paix, with its four lines of carriages drawn up before the big jewelry shops, the fashionable milliners and

dressmakers, then I feel as if my foot were on its native heath, I feel at home.

A carriage stops, a charming little coupé, the height of elegance in its simplicity. A groom opens the door, a woman steps out, and at once all eyes are upon her; her youth is doubtful, her beauty only mediocre, but what every one recognizes at once in her is her perfect way of wearing her perfect costume.

How well I could assume that air! I know exactly how to be rich, how to be fashionable, if mamma would let me dress as I want to and not condemn me to pass through the hands of that frightful Madame Saillard.

And so in papa's newspapers I devour those articles headed "High Life," "In the Social World," "What is Going on in Society," etc.; all those articles signed *Violet*, *Fanfreluche*, *Veloutine*, etc.; all the accounts of weddings, balls, first nights, charity bazaars.

In these articles I find the names of women in society as well as actresses; their frocks and dressmakers are described, and so well that the whole thing makes a curious mixture of countesses and corset-makers, marchionesses and milliners.

About fifty women, all told, seem to represent the elegance of Paris. From morning until night I follow their steps in these items: At ten in the morning the Princess X. is in the Allée des Acacias mounted on a horse which cost twelve thousand francs—it even gives the names of the men who are with her—she stops at La Potinière and chats for a quarter of an hour; I know all about La Potinière, Octave has explained all

that to me; he rides in the mornings, he goes to La Potinière.

Then in the afternoon the Princess is to be found at La Marche, and her costume is minutely described: a reefer jacket with big buttons and a canoeing-cap worn a trifle on one side; near by on the turf is a table adorned with roses, and here the Princess and her friends eat *pate-de-fois-gras* and drink champagne.

Again I read of her in the evening at the Duchesse de Z.'s; it is one of the fashionable events of the year—*tableaux vivants*. A curtain is drawn back, and there, among the flowers, under a flood of electric light, the horsewoman of the Bois, the canoeist of La Marche transformed into Diana, shows her beautiful arms and shoulders and the prettiest foot in Paris.

This is what papa never reads in the papers, but what I always do. It seems as if I entered an enchanted world where all is pleasure and gayety. I hear the rustle of satin and lace, I see the glimmer of pearls and diamonds. One dream fills my mind, one desire possesses my heart: that some day I, too, may be one of those women upon whom the eyes of all Paris are fixed; that I, also, the day after some grand ball, deliciously weary, still hearing in my ears the murmur of flattery, still feeling the admiring glances of hundreds of eyes, that I, too, may read in "Notes of the Social World" that the most beautiful, the most admired, the most surrounded of all the women at this ball was I—I, Catherine Duval, metamorphosed into the Marchioness of this or the Countess of that.

March 24th.

Apart from a match with an engineer, there is one other combination that mamma would consider—if I were in love. Mamma had not a penny of dowry and papa married her entirely for love, and so she still has this feeling of sentiment.

If, for instance, in papa's office there were some clerk at twelve hundred francs a year, very poor but good and industrious and supporting his mother by his exertions, and if I were to go to mamma and say, "There is the man of my choice," her heart would melt within her, and as papa invariably does as she wishes, I should become the wife of the clerk.

And afterward? It would be mamma's life over again, and there is nothing to tempt me in that. Mamma's life is always to be up before any one else in the house, to trot for three hours, armed with a large bunch of keys, from garret to cellar to see that everything is in order; she arranges the great linen-closets, whose snowy piles breathe a delicious odor of lavender and orris; she wages a relentless war upon any grains of dust that may chance to light upon her beloved mahogany furniture—in short, she enjoys the little economies and activities of housekeeping; in her early days she had always been restricted as to money and she does not know what to do with it, while I——

Besides, mamma's one idea in life is papa; as soon as he comes in she herself gets his slippers and installs him with his cigars and newspapers by the fire; she superintends the cooking of his favorite dishes; when he is not well she makes him tea or broth; in short, her

one idea is to anticipate his least desires. All this perhaps made up the domestic happiness of those days; but it is not so now—I should prefer more active enjoyment.

Mamma is really a saint. The Abbé Picard said the other day: "Madame Duval, for twenty years you have been the edification of Le Marais." All of which is true, but I am no saint; I am only a frivolous young Parisienne of 1884, and I pity Le Marais if after mamma it has to depend upon me for edification.

March 27th.

Octave is in great spirits; he has just been made a member of a swell club which has lately been started in the Boulevard Malesherbes, and which is known familiarly as the Green Peas. He has given me a catalogue of the club, and I have just been looking over the list of one hundred and sixty-two members, one hundred and forty of whom are titled; there is one duke (Spanish, to be sure), two princes (and they are Italians), seven marquises, sixty-three counts, nineteen viscounts, and twenty-two barons, and among these are historic names —names that mean position.

For a long time it has been the object of Octave's life to get into this club; he has often spoken of it to me, and one day he said: "I am afraid I shall never get in. You have no idea, Catherine, what a drawback the name of Duval is if one is trying to get in with that set."

He has attained his end, however, and really with great skill. Bezique is his passion, and he plays a remarkable game; in fact, he spends half of his time in

a frightful little club where they do nothing else, and where for love of the game a number of men, who don't even know one another, gather from all parts of Paris and from all grades of society.

Now, at the beginning of last month Octave encountered at this club a certain young count of a very old family, who also had this passion for bezique. They sat down together, and at the end of the first sitting (a sitting which lasted nearly seven hours) the count had lost ten thousand francs; he was white, and had moreover the air of a man who had not the money in his pocket. When they finished playing Octave said, with his most charming smile: "Do not pay me, I beg; I will give you your revenge." And he did that very evening, and on following evenings, but the luck was steadily on Octave's side and he won continually, until at the end of the week the young fellow owed him over thirty thousand francs. Now he was in no condition to pay such a sum at that time and Octave knew it, so he showed himself a good winner, always ready to give his adversary a chance to pay off some of his debt without untying his purse-strings.

But how well it has all turned out for Octave! When they played their first game together a week ago they hardly knew each other; now they call each other "my dear fellow," and when Octave, in the most negligent manner possible, gave him to understand that he would not object to becoming one of the Green Peas, the Count at once exclaimed, "Why, my dear fellow, nothing could be easier; I am on the committee and I will propose you. It will be a much pleasanter place to play

bezique." And that is how Octave became a member of the Green Peas.

March 29th.

We breakfasted together as usual this morning—papa, mamma, and I; that is to say, we took our everlasting, never-varying chocolate together. It was five minutes after eight, and at eight every morning I am expected to appear ready dressed for the day. I only know a wrapper by hearsay. I have to be dressed for the street from the instant I get up, and every day between the first and second breakfast one hour of English, one of French, and one at practising; at one time there was some talk of adding to this an hour of cooking and practical housekeeping.

"The daughters of the Queen of England," said mamma, "learn to do everything for themselves—to sweep their rooms, make their beds, wash and iron, and so on." But I resisted. Papa took my side—he sometimes does against mamma; that is the reason I am not a complete woman—I don't know how to cook or to iron, but all the other talents I have.

Heavens! how I detest the absolutely regular existence we lead, doing the same thing each day at the same hour—it is mamma's delight and my torment. Mamma is certainly responsible for making me hate sundry virtues; at times I feel surging within me instincts of the most vagabond type; I want to tear my clothes, play with the children in the street, breakfast off two sous' worth of fried potatoes, ride a horse in the circus, dance the tight-rope, do anything in fact that is irregular and out of the way.

Every morning at ten minutes past eight, while we are drinking our chocolate, Pierre brings in papa's mail, an enormous mail, sixty or eighty letters from people in all parts of the country who want to buy our paper. Now this morning I spied in the mail a letter, apparently an invitation to a wedding; I always pounce upon these letters and open them, that is my privilege, and here is what was in this morning's letter:

"Monsieur and Madame Bernardel have the pleasure of announcing the marriage of their daughter Léonie to Count Roger de Maumusson."

Léonie Bernardel! I knew her slightly, we were in the same confirmation class. Her father is a paper manufacturer like papa, but not nearly so rich; I have often heard their firm spoken of as a good one of the second class, while ours stands easily first. And she is to be a Countess Léonie Bernardel, an ugly, red-haired, snub-nosed little thing.

I could not restrain a slight exclamation.

"What is it?" asked mamma.

"Just read this," I said.

Mamma read it and she also exclaimed: "Those Bernardels are very foolish."

"They certainly are," added papa, having read in his turn.

Whereupon a long discourse from mamma ensued: nothing more absurd than those marriages; they never turned out well; a girl ought to marry in her own set, and so forth. I know these little sermons very well, for mamma often regales me with them. Papa assented with a nod, meantime reading his letters. As for me, I

did not wince. I seemed not to hear. I kept on buttering my bread with perfect equanimity, but I saw perfectly well that mamma while speaking had cast several glances at me, as if trying to learn my views by the expression on my face.

April 2d.

Poor mamma! How well I know her! When she came into my room this morning at half-past seven, as she does every morning, I had only to look at her to see that something had happened. "Take care," I said to myself, "there is something up; another engineer perhaps."

I was mistaken; this time it is not an engineer, it is a lawyer, but such a lawyer! The pearl of the profession; young, only thirty-one. It was at church that he first had the happiness of seeing me. In our circle there are only two places where a girl is on view, matrimonially speaking, at church or at the Opéra Comique.

I at once inquired the name of this piece of perfection. I certainly did not expect it to be La Tremoille or La Rochefoucauld, but I was not prepared for what followed. Mamma hesitated, so I knew it must be something frightful, and it was: Mouillard—his name is Mouillard—I should be Madame Mouillard. What happiness!

And while I remained speechless at this idea, mamma launched forth into a long harangue upon the merits of her candidate. Such good people, the Mouillards, and such a nice old house; near by, too, in the Rue St. Antoine; I should be right under mamma's wing.

The grandfather had been a lawyer under Louis

Philippe, there in the Rue St. Antoine; the father a lawyer under Napoleon III, in the same house; the son a lawyer under the Republic, in the same place, and if I consent to become Madame Mouillard I suppose that in the twentieth century, under goodness knows what king, emperor, or republic, another young Mouillard will be a lawyer there in the same house, in the same street. Mamma certainly has a perfect genius for discovering in Paris sundry petrified families, who never go anywhere but stay where they were born, living a life that seems to me wonderfully like death.

And while I, half stupefied, was repeating to myself "Madame Mouillard," mamma was eloquently lauding her young lawyer to the skies; his youth had been absolutely estimable—that is one of mamma's most cherished ideas, to find a husband for me whose youth has been estimable. I know perfectly well what she means by that, and usually I listen in silence, but to-day I could not contain myself, and I frankly told mamma that what she calls estimable I call simply ridiculous.

Mamma raised her hands and ejaculated "Ridiculous!"

"Yes, the most ridiculous thing imaginable," I said; "but we won't discuss the matter, mamma; you cannot suppose for a moment that I would marry a man with such a name. Sooner than that I would go into a convent."

"A convent!"

"Yes, a convent. Sooner that than be called Madame Mouillard; my choice would soon be made between that and a convent."

Mamma had the greatest difficulty in pacifying me, but I gained my point after all. There will be no more talk of that young man.

April 3d.

In this morning's paper, under the head of "The Future Leaders of Society," I found the description of a ball given by the Marquise de Massy-Pressac to introduce her daughter Théodorine, one of the prettiest and most brilliant of the débutantes of Parisian society. She is also very rich, and will probably bring to her husband a dowry of two millions and a historic castle in Touraine.

The newspaper told me that, and also that "the young girl, charming in her toilet of white," led the german with the Comte de Comillet, "an adept at such matters," and who had invented several new figures for the occasion. One of these, "The Golden Mist," had created a perfect furor.

The young girls at a given signal were enveloped in an enormous veil of white gauze spangled with gold stars; their partners meanwhile vainly endeavoring to pierce the transparent barrier which separated them. The effect was simply charming. The names of the girls were given at full length and they all belonged to the aristocracy of birth or money. The article went on to speak of the lovely eyes of Mademoiselle de Frenanges, the golden hair of Mademoiselle de Frondeville, and the exquisite neck and arms of Mademoiselle Palmer.

And I, too, have a pair of charming shoulders, and if I could show them I am sure the reporters would find them fully as worthy of a place in their items as those

of Mademoiselle Palmer; but mamma thinks otherwise; she thinks that a young girl should not wear a low dress. There is probably but one woman in Paris with such ideas, and to think that she should be my mother!

Last night I was dragged to a ball at the Poupinels', Rue des Archives, Le Marais—always Le Marais, we never get away from it. It was mortally stupid — a number of young fellows, very young and silly, who looked at me with round eyes and all said the same thing: "Mademoiselle, you are the queen of the ball," and so I was, but it is but small distinction to be the queen of such a festivity as that.

Dear mamma never can understand that these tedious entertainments are really agony to me; she adores the Poupinels, who are distantly related to us, a good old patriarchal family, very numerous, much united, and where there is a never-ceasing round of baptisms. There are six or seven young households constantly blessed by Providence, and each of these benedictions is made the occasion of a tiresome family gathering. Forty, fifty, even sixty people around a table arranged like a horseshoe—grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, and a whole tribe of children.

The most terrible time is at dessert. The older people propose toasts and sing songs bearing on the occasion; the little ones recite poems and La Fontaine's fables; then the new baby is brought into the centre of the horseshoe and its lips are wet with a few drops of wine, whereupon its cries rend the air, and then every one laughs and becomes enthusiastic and says, "How

like its mother it looks!" or, "The image of its father!"

Meanwhile mamma, from the other end of the table, is gazing at me with emotion. I know what that look means; she is imagining a similar banquet, when the hero of the occasion, screaming and crying in his lace dress, shall be an infant engineer; and after him still others, all destined to enter the business and become in time members of the firm.

April 5th.

This evening, after dinner, papa read his paper in his easy-chair; always the same paper at the same hour and in the same chair; mamma worked at her everlasting piece of embroidery; I played mechanically on the piano, without thinking of or enjoying what I was playing—something of Haydn's or Mozart's, always something old.

This is a sample of our evenings; this is what mamma and papa delight in—a corner by the fire and the domestic joys. "Now, Catherine, a little Mozart," this is what mamma says every evening at about half-past eight, we three having dined quietly together. I go to the piano meekly and begin.

From time to time papa stops his reading and mamma her work. They look at each other and at me, they smile and are content. Then they resume their occupations, while I continue to lull them by the old-fashioned airs which they love and which put me to sleep.

Having drummed thus for three quarters of an hour I arose, and in order to wake myself up I began to walk up and down the long drawing-room. I stopped be-

fore a window; the night was charming, and I suddenly announced my intention of taking a turn in the garden. Mamma at once began to protest; I should take cold.

"But you know, mamma, I never take cold."

It ended in my going out, though wrapped in many shawls by my careful parent.

There was another kind of music to be heard in the garden, also well known to me—the noise of the machinery in the mill, panting and groaning as the great wheels went round and round. An odor of soot and coal was in the air and the sickly smell of the paper. The business is going on well just now; papa is coining money, and for six weeks the mills have been running up to two and three o'clock in the morning. It would seem as if nothing were so much needed at present as paper.

I walked along the length of the main wall of the manufactory, and looked at one of the little windows of the basement. The big wheel of the machinery was going at full speed, and men half stripped were feeding the furnaces already at white heat.

It is for me that the machinery goes at such a rate, for me that the workmen pass the night at the furnaces, for me that similar machinery is going at a similar speed in our factories in Angoulême, and for me that sundry waterfalls on the Doubs turn a dozen or more mills—for me, that I may be rich, very rich.

But it is not for me alone that so many people work so hard day and night, and that for so many years the Duvals, father and son, have heaped up money at the cost of so much hard work; it is also for a little blonde

called Pauline Verdier, who plays in comedy at the Palais Royal.

I saw her to-day for the first time, this little blonde. Mamma and I had gone in our ancient chariot of the time of Louis Philippe to pay a visit in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. On the Boulevard des Italiens we were caught in such a crush that our carriage could only move at a very slow pace. Just then, in a charming little coupé, coming from the opposite direction, I beheld my brother, gay, radiant, and triumphant, and at his side a pretty little blonde, young and charming, and showing her white teeth as she smiled.

Octave saw me, and suddenly, evidently upon his suggestion, the girl unfurled a large Japanese fan, behind which he disappeared. The two carriages approached one another, their wheels almost touched as they passed, and I detected the girl giving a comprehensive glance which took us all in, horses, carriage, mamma, and myself, and then followed an almost imperceptible change of expression, which meant, "No style there," and I said to myself, "My future sister-in-law."

Mamma, fortunately, saw nothing. I never had seen this young person before, and yet her face was not entirely strange to me. Suddenly I remembered. As soon as I got home I ran to Octave's room, and there on his table, in an album filled with pictures of Parisian actresses, I found that of a little blonde, dressed, or rather undressed, as a Neapolitan fisher-boy. Under the picture were these words, "Pauline Verdier, Palais Royal."

While I have been walking this evening, melancholy and alone in the garden, she, Mademoiselle Verdier, has exhibited on the stage of the Palais Royal some marvellous toilet paid for by papa's workmen and machines.

April 8th.

There is much to read in this morning's papers. First the description of the trousseau of Mademoiselle de Luc-Gardannes, who is to marry the Vicomte de Blavigny. Yesterday half of Paris flocked to Madame Valerie's rooms to see this charming trousseau of her manufacture. Two columns of fine print were not enough for the enumeration of these marvels. I cut the article out and have read and re-read it so often that I know it by heart.

Sets upon sets of underlinen trimmed with Valenciennes and embroidery; white cashmere dressing-gown trimmed with old Vienna lace; silk dressing-gown trimmed with Mechlin lace and lined with pale blue moiré; twenty dozen light silk stockings and twenty dozen black silk stockings; thirty dozen pairs of twenty buttoned gloves, etc.

This was followed by a description of a *fête* given for charity. A stage had been erected in the hall of one of the finest old houses in the Faubourg St. Germain, and there some of the best known women in society had given a little operetta and even danced a fandango with tambourines and castanets.

What a capital idea! to do good and at the same time amuse one's self so delightfully! To unite duty and pleasure, to serve God and Mammon!

That is my idea of charity, especially toward those who paid a hundred francs for their seats; they at least had something for their money, the honor of applauding those pretty women dressed as Chinese in the opera and as Spaniards in the ballet.

When I compare this with mamma's charities: she is the president of a society for the benefit of the apprentices connected with the business, and every winter we have a subscription ball for its benefit; and such a ball! all the frumps of Le Marais, a review of the fashions of the last thirty years.

I naturally attend this function, clothed in virginal white and surrounded by a staff of mamma's favorite engineers, who for the sum of ten francs have purchased the right to dance with me and bore me to death, from ten in the evening to two in the morning.

This brilliant collection has lately made a brilliant addition to its number. Papa has had the luck to come across a young chemist who is going to help us to make a little more money than we are making. From morning until night my ears ring with the praises of this individual. He has invented for the rotting or discoloration of rags, I forget which, a certain solution which, it appears, is something absolutely exquisite.

This ingenious young man's name is Caffin, and he looks at me with admiring eyes. He would be sufficiently good-looking if he were not so aggressively healthy; his cheeks are rosy as two apples; he ought to invent some solution for his own discoloration.

I say he would be sufficiently good-looking, but after all I don't know, for I am no great judge of a man's

good looks. Yesterday he dined here, and with him the whole tribe of Chavirannes, old friends of mamma's. As we left the table, Geneviève Chavirannes seized me and led me off into a corner of the drawing-room.

"Now, you certainly will admit that he is handsome," she cried. She was red with enthusiasm, redder even than Caffin himself, so I surveyed him with great care from his head to his feet, and with the best will in the world to consider him handsome I simply could not.

Geneviève Chavirannes often honors me with her confidences in this direction, and I have often seen her fall into ecstasies about men who don't move me in the least. I wonder if I am a monster of indifference and insensibility!

The other day in Octave's room I came across a story of Balzac's, which I read on the sly; it was the story of an unsophisticated little provincial named Ursula Mirouet, who from her window looked across the street and saw a young man at his window shaving, and while looking at him she felt a sudden emotion seize her which affected her so that she sat down trembling. She consulted her old tutor as to what this strange feeling could be, and he replied, "It is love; love as it should be, quick, involuntary, which comes like a thief, and sooner or later comes to all."

It has never come to me—never has any man caused me the slightest emotion of that nature. To be sure, this young person whom she had seen thus elegantly occupied was the Vicomte Savinien de Portenduère; perhaps it was on that account that she looked at him

so attentively and that her heart opened itself so easily to the tender passion.

It is like the famous meeting of Romeo and Juliet. Here is the true explanation of that episode: Juliet perceives a young man whom she does not know, and at once demands his name. "Who is he, nurse? Go at once and find out. That is the man I intend to marry; either that or death." Well and good, but let us look a little further into this matter. Where did all this happen? In a ballroom at the house of the Capulets, people among the very best in Florence. Romeo was magnificently dressed in satin and velvet, for in those days the hideous black coat had not been invented—that frightful species of livery, the same for princes and engineers. Juliet could be perfectly easy, there was no danger that her nurse would tell her that the handsome unknown was a young chemist who had discovered a certain solution.

Among such surroundings I myself, unimpressionable as I am, might have found Romeo charming. I can understand being struck by lightning, and even taking a sort of pleasure in it, but still it is well to know whence the flash comes.

Yes, Juliet fell in love at first sight, but in her own set, which was the best set of those days, and which contained nothing displeasing to her. For my part I have not the least desire to fall in love in my own set, which, generally speaking, displeases me highly.

April 11th.

To-day at half-past six I had finished dressing, for I

dress myself and arrange my own hair—such was the way of our grandmothers and such is mine; no maid. Mamma says, "Margaret can do your hair;" poor, dear old Margaret, she knows just one way of arranging hair, a coil of braids behind; I can do better than that myself. I have invented a certain little curly effect around the face that is mamma's despair but is by no means unbecoming.

I was just putting the finishing touch to these little curls when some one knocked at my door.

"Who is it?"

"I—Octave."

"In two minutes I shall have finished."

"Hurry, I must speak to you before dinner."

A few minutes later my brother enters in a state of great excitement.

"Oh, if you only knew——"

"What?"

"The most delightful and the most unexpected piece of news."

"What? Tell me at once; I am dying of curiosity."

"We are going to leave this frightful part of the town and going to live—guess where!"

"I never can guess. Where?"

"In a handsome house in the Rue de Monceau, with a big garden on the park."

"Who told you? Papa or mamma?"

"Neither; see here."

Octave drew from his pocket a newspaper and showed me, in the list of sales of real estate, that three days before, for the sum of twelve hundred thousand

francs, papa had bought this house in the Rue de Monceau, with its garden, hot-houses, stables for twelve horses, and accommodations for eight carriages.

The twenty-sixth of April is my birthday, and I have no doubt that this is papa's surprise for me. Last year when he asked me what I would like for a birthday treat, I said, "Let us move, papa. Since you have so much money, why not buy a house really in Paris?"

Papa was aghast. He said he had not so much money as I seemed to think he had, and the result was a paltry bracelet instead of the new house.

But this year papa has made a great deal of money owing to this wood pulp. For some time I have heard nothing else talked of; it seems that now we make paper out of wood—no more rags, no more straw, nothing but wood. Great pines come from Norway to be chopped and sliced up by our machines, and after going through many processes they are transformed into newspapers, which are sold for a cent apiece on the boulevards. It makes very ugly paper, neither white nor good, but papa is convinced that it is the paper of the future. And it is this paper which has paid for the house in the Park Monceau.

Dinner is announced. I have no time to consult with Octave as to what is best to be done. I do the first thing which comes into my head, which is to rush downstairs, three steps at a time, and plunging into papa's study throw my arms around his neck and shower kisses upon him: "Oh, thank you so much, papa."

Then from him to mamma, with the same deluge of kisses: "And you, too, mamma; oh, so much."

While I am embracing her I hear papa say: "Why do you thank us, my dear?"

"Oh, you know very well."

"No, indeed," said mamma; "we have no idea."

"It is because of the new house, mamma; the house in the Park Monceau. It will be delightful to live there; I guessed it was a surprise for my birthday——" I finish my sentence mechanically, for one glance at papa and mamma show me that I have not guessed right. They have a guilty air as they protest somewhat awkwardly: "How did you come to know of that house? Yes, we bought it, but not to live in. It has a tenant with a lease of six years. We consider it an excellent investment, and it will all be yours in the future, my children."

In the future! Everything for the future, nothing for the present. The disappointment was too great and I burst into tears. I cry very easily it is a weakness of mine, and yet it is a force at the same time. It always upsets papa to see me, and so he at once began to try to console me.

"You shall have what you want for your birthday, my child; just what you want."

"Never mind, papa; I don't want anything. It was stupid of me to cry so like a baby. Come, let us go to dinner."

Dinner was melancholy that evening, and the evening was more melancholy still. We had hardly left the table when Octave excused himself and went out. I knew why. The papers that morning announced a new piece at the Palais Royal, and in the list of those

who were to take part was the name of Mademoiselle Pauline Verdier. Octave went and I remained, only to hear the inevitable "Catherine, give us a little Mozart."

So I played for them, but fortunately in about ten minutes there arrives, fresh from Besançon, one of papa's engineers, the head of the Franche Comté branch. He is married, so I don't mind him. He brings excellent news. A new machine that has just been put in has proved a great success, saving any number of francs a day—more money, as usual. I excuse myself to go to bed, and papa in saying good-night repeats: "Anything you like for your birthday, Catherine."

April 12th.

"Anything I like!" I know just what I should like, and I mean to have it.

This morning after papa had gone to the works I slipped into his study to see if I could find the *Figaro*. I wanted to see the account of the new piece at the Palais Royal and the actors therein, and this is what I read:

"The piece is in four acts, and in each act Mademoiselle Verdier has a sentence and a new dress. She was exceedingly poor in her four sentences, but exceedingly charming in her four costumes, each one of which is a marvel of elegance and audacity."

She has a good dressmaker and also a first-class maid; that is very evident.

The newspaper was spread out on the table, and my glance was wandering carelessly over it when suddenly it fell upon the following among the advertisements on the last page:

"Situation wanted, by a first-class lady's maid; excellent dressmaker. Six years' reference from one of the best families in Paris. Address F. M., 42 Ave. des Champs Elysées."

I pounce on papa's *Bottin* and find that 42 Avenue des Champs Elysées is the residence of the Marquis de Diégo-Brandés.

Now I am constantly meeting with the name of the Marquise de Diégo-Brandés in the newspaper accounts of the doings of the gay world. Her costumes are described at length, and a full description of one of her hats was given, said hat being compared to a poem with its bunch of field flowers with butterflies resting upon them; and I remember that the same paper announced that the Marchioness was soon to leave Paris. This is doubtless the reason why Mademoiselle F. M. is looking for a situation. Oh, if I could only have this first-class lady's maid! What if I were to ask this of papa for my birthday treat? I will, but I can fancy mamma's horror at the very idea of a maid who advertises in a paper and who has lived with a Marchioness.

Now I must carry this through, so I have posted a little note asking Mademoiselle F. M. to come here tomorrow at four o'clock. Every Thursday from three to five mamma is at her orphanage in the Faubourg St. Antoine, and I shall be the one to receive this young person.

April 15th.

She came yesterday. I saw her arrive and watched her from the window; as she crossed the courtyard she looked around her with curious glances; she evidently felt herself in some strange, unfamiliar part of the world,

not the Paris she was accustomed to. She came, she saw, she conquered.

Not pretty but charming, elegant, positively distinguished. Her gown was simple, perfectly suitable to her station, and fitting her to perfection. I never had a gown with so much chic as that. I felt awkward and embarrassed, and I said to myself, "She is too desirable; she will not want to come to me."

I had to ask her the usual questions, however. I asked where she had lived and why she was leaving.

"I have been for six years," she replied, "with the Marquise de Diégo-Brandés. I was twenty-two when I went to her, and I have never lived with any one else. I worked for four years before that with Worth."

Worth! She pronounced his name with a sort of religious reverence and made a short pause after it. Then she went on: "It is perhaps on that account that I am good at dressmaking. Monsieur le Marquis was the first secretary at the Spanish Embassy; he has just been made Minister at the Hague. Madame la Marquise wanted me to go with her to Holland, and would have given me my own price had I consented, but I could not bring myself to leave Paris; all my friends and relatives live here and I simply could not."

She spoke in a pleasant voice, clearly and decidedly; I felt her superiority. I ventured, however, to ask her if she were capable of making all kinds of frocks.

"All kinds of frocks! Oh, Mademoiselle, I did not say that. I did not undertake the handsomest frocks of Madame la Marquise; her ball-gowns and her dinner-gowns she had made elsewhere, but with a good

seamstress that I had at my disposal I made all the other costumes. Mademoiselle will certainly think that I speak of myself with undue assurance, but I must say that there is a certain style about my work. When Madame had seen at the theatre any costume which pleased her she would send me the next evening. I would take a bit of paper and a pencil with me, for I can draw a little, and a week later Madame would have the frock; it would cost her two or three hundred francs instead of seven or eight hundred. It was in that way that last year I reproduced for Madame, with some slight modifications, a frock of Mademoiselle Bartet's of the Théâtre Français. Madame la Marquise wore that frock at a bazaar where she had a stall, and the next day there were four or five lines in the paper about it. Madame was kind enough to show it to me; so I think I should be able to do for Mademoiselle—with such a figure that ought not to be difficult. I beg pardon, I ought not to speak like that, but when one loves one's work as I do it is delightful to have a mistress who will do one credit."

Would I pardon her! I said to her, "Wait here, I shall return in a moment," and with that I rushed into papa's study, where he was sitting alone.

Papa adores me, and when mamma is not at hand I can make him do almost anything, so I sat down on his lap and embracing him tenderly by way of preliminary, I began:

"Papa, dear, do you remember saying that for my birthday you would give me whatever I wanted?"

"Yes, so I did."

"You remember it then?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, what I want is a perfect treasure of a lady's maid who is here. Do let me have her, and in a week you will see how charming I shall be in the gowns she will make me."

"But isn't that something for your mother to decide?"

"No, it is for you. Mamma doesn't want me to look too well; she thinks it isn't just the thing; she has such old-time ideas, you know. But you, you always like me to look well, I know. This woman has lived with the Marquise de Diégo-Brandés; mamma has a right, of course, to investigate her references—you see I am reasonable—but nothing more, and if the references are all right, let me have her."

"Let us wait for your mother, my dear; she will be in soon."

"No, no! don't let's wait, I beg. A lady's maid! Not to ask more than that on one's birthday of a father worth twenty millions!"

"Twenty millions, my dear!"

"Yes, indeed, papa, I am sure of it. You are going to deny it, but your denial is so feeble that I cannot believe it."

"I assure you, my dear——"

"You needn't, papa, for I sha'n't believe you; but that is neither here nor there, it is a question of this woman."

And I managed so well that I gained my point. Mamma was to have the privilege of making inquiries.

She went to see Madame de Diégo-Brandés and was obliged to admit that everything was entirely satisfactory, so next Monday she comes to me. Her name is Félicie.

April 16th.

I had a serious conversation this morning with Octave, who is in great straits for money—Mademoiselle Verdier's frocks must have cost a good deal. He is tired, and I can quite understand it, of the expedients he has had to resort to to meet his expenses.

"One thing," he said, "and one only, can put a stop to this sort of thing, and that is your marriage. Papa must give you at least three millions; the more you get, the more pleased I shall be; you won't find me going about saying that it is unjust, that you ought not to have so much. No, indeed; because as soon as papa has loaded you down with money in that way I shall say, 'Now it is my turn, papa; a hundred thousand a year, if you please,' and I shall get it."

"Yes, but whom am I to marry? It seems as if here were the place to look for him," and as I spoke I laid my hand upon the catalogue of Octave's club which lay upon the mantelpiece, for this conversation took place in his room.

"Yes," I continued, "this list is full of names that would suit me admirably—counts, barons, marquises. There must be in here at least a dozen young persons, charming though destitute."

"Oh, there is no lack of that variety among them; they are nearly all ruined. There is really great destitution among the upper classes; when you get among

them you are really torn with compassion. How I pity those whose fathers do not know how to work! But you said 'charming and young'; that is a difficulty to begin with. Generally those that are charming are not young, and those that are young are not charming. I have sometimes thought, however—look under M: Malaric, the Marquis de Malaric, there he is; young, only twenty-five, good family, fine-looking, a capital swordsman; and on horseback—a veritable centaur! He has fought duels and had the most surprising adventures; a man of some importance. He is hard-pressed, and can only rehabilitate himself by a rich marriage. Still it might be rather risky; Malaric in a few years has run through his own fortune of three millions and owes some twelve or fifteen hundred thousand more."

I was aghast. I would not take a duke at such a price. An impoverished husband, perhaps, but not one that would impoverish me. I want an honorable, sensible, dignified man, poor through no fault of his own, belonging to a good old family that has been overcome by misfortune, not by bezique. I have no intention of embarrassing myself with some crack-brained youth who at the end of six weeks would begin to scatter papa's millions in company with dancers and actresses.

I inherit certain practical qualities from mamma. I can see things fairly, just as they are. I am nothing without my money, there is my strength; consequently it would be the height of folly to allow my husband to throw away that money, without which I should be nowhere.

I talked all this over with Octave, who, in spite of his youthful follies, has considerable common-sense. I explained to him the sort of husband I wanted, and he has told me that I ought to retain free possession of my fortune and that it could all be arranged by the terms of the settlement. Octave is really a very good adviser.

April 20th.

I possess a perfect witch in Félicie. With one stroke of her wand she has made a different being of me. I knew I was pretty and had a good figure, but I never suspected to what heights I might rise.

It was settled that Félicie was to come yesterday morning. Toward ten o'clock she arrived and was interviewed by mamma. I am always to be dressed simply: quiet colors for the daytime, and for the evening, for dinners in town, or for dances, white muslin—nothing else; apparently there is no salvation outside white muslin. Mamma also permits my evening gowns to be cut out a little in the neck—just a little—and to show how much, she drew with the end of her finger under my chin a minute square which I might have held in the palm of my hand, which is not a large one.

Félicie listened respectfully without making any remarks, nodding her head from time to time. Fortunately, the time had come for mamma's daily conversation with the cook, and as we were to give a large dinner the following day the conversation was a long one. I was left alone with Félicie, to whom I explained that she must now show me what she could do, as I wanted a new frock for the coming dinner; muslin, of

course, and perfectly simple, as mamma insisted, but made in Félicie's style.

"Perhaps we can manage it," said she; "if my seamstress can come and work part of the night, we may be able to accomplish it."

"I will send for her at once," I replied.

"And the muslin?"

"There is a whole closet full here."

"Very well; then I will take Mademoiselle's measure at once."

"By all means."

"Oh, not like that! If Mademoiselle will be so good as to take off her gown. I really do not feel acquainted with Mademoiselle's figure, and unless I do I cannot do her justice."

I hastily took off my gown and stood before my judge in my corsets. What would she think of me?

Her first remark was a cry of horror, a "Good heavens!" which struck a chill to my soul.

"What is it?" said I, afraid that she had discovered some terrible deformity in me.

"It is these corsets. Does Mademoiselle always wear corsets like these?"

"Always," said I.

"Oh, what shall we do? I shall never be able to fit a bodice over corsets like these. The other day, when I first saw Mademoiselle, I did not see what a pretty figure she had; I guessed it. I felt that her corsets were massacring her. This is too bad; there is no time to have new ones made before to-morrow, but, perhaps, if Mademoiselle will permit me, something may be done."

I felt that I was in the hands of an artist as her skilful fingers flew here and there, trying to give a little pliability to those heavy corsets, in which my figure was crushed as in a vise, and suddenly she gave another little cry, but this time it was one of joy.

"I can arrange it, Mademoiselle; two good snips of the scissors in front will do it. Now, let us see the result."

The result was admirable. My figure seemed to be suddenly released from the vise that compressed it; quite a transformation, in fact, such as one sees at the pantomime.

"That was all it needed," cried Félicie. "No one will recognize Mademoiselle to-morrow evening. As to the neck, I shall take the liberty of making it a little more open than Madame spoke of; Mademoiselle can wear low dresses without any fear, she is not like some of the skeletons we see so often."

All this was said with a mixture of boldness and respect that was positively charming, and I felt that Félicie was really sincere in her admiration for my shoulders and my figure.

I made quite a sensation when I entered the drawing-room that evening, five minutes before dinner, where all the guests were assembled. I had made mamma promise not to occupy herself with my costume. "Have confidence in Félicie," I said; "it will be only white muslin as usual—nothing else."

And there was nothing else, but how different from formerly. Félicie had arranged my hair charmingly, with little curls upon the forehead and upon the neck,

and the dress was like a cloud enveloping me. I felt as if treading on air as I looked at myself in the mirrors in the hall. I hardly knew myself.

Nor mamma either, for that matter, for I saw her open her eyes wide as I entered the room. So did papa and Octave and the young engineers, of whom there were several at dinner—three or four, I did not take the trouble to count them.

Mamma was not altogether pleased, I could see that, but papa was enchanted. He thought me charming, and felt proud of being the father of such a daughter. As for the engineers, their eyes were fairly starting from their heads.

But Octave's approval was what I valued most, for he is a connoisseur in such matters. All he said to me was, "You are simply marvellous," but it was enough. Oh, for some place suitable for this marvel to shine in!

May 5th.

Mamma has given in and has ceased to struggle. She is vanquished, overcome. I wear the gowns and hats that suit me, and Félicie has permission to make for me what she considers becoming. Papa is on my side, so each day I come out in something more audaciously elegant, much to his delight. I fairly adore Félicie, for it is to her that I owe my first real success before a real public. A week ago I said to Octave, "I am now ready to be seen; for goodness' sake try to arrange it so that I can go somewhere where I can be seen by people whose notice is worth something."

So Octave came home yesterday with four seats for

the opening of the Circus in the Champs Elysées. It is one of the events of the season, so we went. I had a charming costume: a jacket that was a work of art, and on my head a toque with a delicious little aigrette in it. I knew I looked well.

We were a little late. In order to reach our seats we were obliged to go through the corridor near the stalls, a thing somewhat difficult on account of the number of people gathered there to look at the horses. Octave gave me his arm, and as we struggled along I heard him say, "Good-evening, Prince."

I turned my head to see what a prince was like, for I never had seen one so near, but I did not look long, for his eyes were fixed upon me and spoke their admiration in the plainest terms. At last we succeeded in getting through the crowd of people, and as soon as I was fairly seated next to Octave I said, "Is he a real prince?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Octave.

"Prince of what?"

"He is an Italian, Prince Romanelli. When I was a second in that duel last year Prince Romanelli was the second on the other side; that is how I first knew him, and we have met since then at the club."

"Oh, I remember now. He is one of the two princes in the catalogue."

"You know that catalogue better than I do."

The minutes went by. I was not entirely taken up with what went on in the ring—trained dogs, tight-rope performers, or whatever it might be. I was more intent on the effect I produced, for I felt myself the focus of the opera-glasses of the group of young men who sur-

rounded the Prince. I felt they were talking about me. During the *entr'acte* Octave went for a little turn in the corridor, and on his return he said, "You have made quite a sensation."

"I know it."

"There are four or five of our club men there with the Prince, who asked who that charming young person seated next me was, and when they learned that it was my sister, I can assure you they became complimentary, the Prince especially, and he is by no means demonstrative usually."

"His opera-glass is demonstrative, he has hardly taken it off me."

And he did not take it off me till the end of the performance; then he managed so that he and his friends should be in the corridor as we left, and as I passed I heard a slight murmur of admiration that went straight to my heart.

He is not a very young man, Prince Romanelli—nearer forty than thirty, I should say—but handsome and dignified. I said to Octave, "Is he married, this Prince of yours?"

"I am sure I don't know. What questions you ask!" And then we both began to laugh. Mamma asked us what we were laughing at, but we did not consider it necessary to tell her.

May 6th.

Octave is radiantly proud of me. He says he had no idea I could make such a hit; I have surpassed all his hopes. After the performance the other night, papa, mamma, and I returned home in our ancient landau in

melancholy fashion, Octave having left us to go to his club, where he was greeted with many congratulations. So I am popular among the Green Peas.

The Prince was particularly enthusiastic; he was very friendly with Octave, far more so than usual, for hitherto he had always been somewhat reserved, but last night he became almost affectionate. "See what it is to have a pretty sister!" said Octave, laughing.

May 7th.

Our evening at the Circus has certainly borne fruit. Mamma received to-day a most unexpected visit from a certain Marquise de Rutly, whom we hardly know. She came to see mamma once, two or three years ago, about getting up a bazaar for some charitable purpose; the plan fell through, however, and since then mamma had heard nothing of the Marquise, who is a woman of excellent family and who goes a great deal into society and is interested in many charities, though by no means rich.

When she arrived I was in the drawing-room with mamma, fortunately, for otherwise mamma would have said "No," but I made her say "Yes." The Marquise de Rutly came to ask mamma if I might help her at her stall at a bazaar which is to take place next week at a house in the Faubourg St. Germain. This bazaar is to be a very elegant and exclusive affair—an event, in short—and has been announced as such in the papers during the past month. If Madame de Rutly has come to ask me, it is because she was at the Circus night before last.

"I will go straight to the point," she said to mamma, "and confess to you frankly that the reason I want Mademoiselle Duval to help me is because she is so pretty that it seems to me a shame not to utilize so much grace and beauty. Beauty has its obligations as well as nobility, and with such eyes and such a figure one positively owes one's self to the poor."

How charming it was to hear all this! Mamma tried to resist, but of late I have gained considerably in self-possession. I found some graceful phrase to thank Madame de Rutly with, and managed so to turn the conversation that everything was finally arranged just as I wanted it. Next Thursday and Friday, from four to seven, I shall sell roses and lilacs at Madame de Rutly's stall; the other assistants are all girls from the most fashionable set; I know who they are, and I feel I have nothing to fear. I know what I am worth since that night at the Circus.

May 12th.

The first day of the bazaar is over. At first I was almost lost in that world where everything was so new to me, but I very soon felt at home; my success was quick and easy. There were eight of us young girls at the stall, and very soon the other seven had retired into insignificance, while I was selling as many roses as I could dispose of at five francs apiece. We each had fifty to begin with, and at the end of an hour mine were all gone. How proud I was to be able to be the first to say to Madame de Rutly, "I have no more roses, Madame."

And I did not sell them all at five francs; I sold one

for a hundred, and to whom but Prince Romanelli! His tact was charming. He alluded in the most graceful way to our meeting at the Circus—he speaks French very well, though with a little hesitation in the choice of words that seems to give a certain value to what he says. All of my fellow saleswomen knew him, and at once fell upon him like a flock of crows.

"A rose, Prince, a rose!"

"Buy one of me, Prince; buy one of me!"

As for me, I made no movement whatever. With great adroitness he got rid of the crowd of girls who surrounded him, came over to me, and it was from me only that he bought flowers. I said, "Thank you, Prince," not without some little effort, for that sort of thing does not come easily at first, but I soon became accustomed to it, and by the time we had exchanged a few remarks I was quite at my ease.

Mamma's face was a study. After his departure I explained to her where I had seen "the Prince." It is great fun to say "Prince," and it would be still greater fun to have some one say "Princess."

May 13th.

Second day of the sale. He came again, as I knew he would, and walked straight up to me: "May I beg for another rose?" I chose one for him with the greatest care, for which he again gave me a hundred francs, with one or two gallant remarks: the sale should go on forever, he would prove my most faithful purchaser, etc. Then he made the somewhat fanciful suggestion of one rose selling others—it would have

sounded very vapid on French lips, but with that Italian accent and that low, musical voice the effect was charming.

I answered him with an ease which astonished me. All this, besides, only took a few minutes. The other girls were furious and threw sundry black looks at me; I was the only one there who had sold two roses for two hundred francs. But the interesting part of all this was yet to come.

Five minutes or so after the departure of the Prince I overheard two of the girls talking together. They could not see me, and had no idea I could hear them. They were speaking of him.

"Did you see? He gave a hundred francs for the rose."

"So he did yesterday."

"And they say he is absolutely ruined."

"Where did he raise those two hundred francs?"

"Perhaps it is money well invested. It seems she is enormously rich, this little paper manufacturer."

"Hush! here comes Madame de Rutly. "

They stopped short. Madame de Rutly approached, and one of the young girls said to her, "Your nephew is putting up the price of roses, Madame."

Her nephew! How much there may be in one word! And it was she who asked me to help at her stall, and he has no money, and he only bought roses of me whom he did not know! And Madame de Rutly, soon after he left, began to hold forth to me upon his virtues: he was really a most charming fellow, with great taste in everything, but a perfect passion for art; his palace at Ven-

ice had a picture-gallery of positive masterpieces, the ceilings by Tiepolo, etc.

The little paper manufacturer begins to see daylight in all this.

May 14th.

Still more light! A coronet is at my disposition if I want it. I have only to stretch out my hand.

And what makes this little romance so amusing is that mamma has not the least suspicion of it. I have just had a long talk upon the subject with Octave, and mamma having gone out we were able to discuss it fully. This is what he told me: The young Comte de Moltain—he is the man through whom Octave got into the Green Peas—is Prince Romanelli's intimate friend, and he has told Octave how things stand.

The Prince was tremendously struck by my beauty the other evening at the Circus—that was the beginning of it. He wants to marry, and he must marry a rich woman. The Count told Octave all this with perfect loyalty to his friend and yet perfect frankness toward Octave.

The Prince belongs to one of the old Venetian families; he has connections among the French aristocracy which would gain for his wife entrance to the most exclusive houses. He is not absolutely ruined, he has enough to live on—twenty thousand francs or so a year—a superb palace at Venice, and in this palace a fine collection of pictures of the old Italian school; they would have been worth a good deal of money sixty years ago, but there is little demand for the Italian school now. It is only a question of time, however, and

they will be once more in favor—we tire of everything in turn.

But one thing we never tire of—money. The Prince learned that I was very rich; he made a point of seeing me two or three times, and each inspection confirmed the favorable impression I had made. He was not the man, as he said, to marry money with his eyes shut. He had always insisted upon three things: first, a pretty wife; second, plenty of money with her; third, the money must have been honorably acquired.

During the last two years he had had several marriages proposed to him—marriages where the dowry has been three, four, or five millions—but he has refused them all; it was not money that one could marry, it was in families enriched by too sudden speculations; time has something to do with it, there are degrees in money as in everything else. We are not a family suddenly made rich. Our money is clean, honestly made in business during the last century. We are a good, old, honest family.

In short, these are the Prince's sentiments: I please him, my money pleases him. I have only to lift my finger to have him at my feet and a charming little coronet upon my head. One evening at the Opera I saw a princess from a distance; we were in a second-tier box. How delightful to think that if this marriage comes off I shall never enter a second-tier box again! This princess had a little coronet of diamonds fastened carelessly in her hair. How it became her! She was ugly, and it made her almost handsome, while I, who am not ugly——

So Octave has told me all this without attempting to conceal or alter any of the facts, and he is quite right. He is convinced that the Prince, who would not marry a daughter of a Peruvian banker with six millions would take me with three, because my money is honest, because I am very pretty, and because, to all appearance, I am sufficiently adaptable to transform myself easily into a brilliant young princess.

A princess! But I shall not allow myself to be dazzled. I want to know all about the Prince's past life; all that Octave has told me came from his friend the Count, who only inspires me with a mediocre confidence—he owes money to Octave and to everybody else; he may want the Prince to make a rich match so that he can borrow money of him afterward.

I do not wish to pay too dearly for my title. I am not the woman to throw myself blindly into the arms of an adventurer. I have begged Octave to learn everything he can about the Prince at the club; to turn the conversation upon him and to repeat to me absolutely everything that is said. Mamma could not do this for me, so I am obliged to look after the matter myself, and I mean to do it to the best of my ability.

When I was little I had a German nurse who taught me this proverb: "It is God who sends the nuts, but he does not crack them."

May 15th.

A perfect flood of information. Yesterday evening Octave succeeded in introducing the subject of the Prince into the chat at the club, and here is the result of the different opinions, duly classified:

A (a hardened card-player, who knows nothing but cards): "Romanelli—he plays bezique fairly, piquet well, and whist very well indeed."

B (a sporting character): "Romanelli, eh? I bought a mare from him last year. He sold her to me with the usual guarantees; three weeks after she began to limp badly, but I could say nothing, as the delays had expired."

C (another sporting man): "You are wrong to suspect Romanelli of such a thing; he is honor itself. You lamed the mare yourself trotting her on hard ground. I have known her for the past three years. I hunted with her at Chantilly in 1880, and she was as right as a trivet."

B: "Why did Romanelli sell her, then?"

C: "Because he is hard up; every one knows that."

B: "Hard up! I think he poses for that. I don't altogether believe in his poverty; his palace at Venice is filled with masterpieces of the first order."

D: "An old palace which is falling to pieces, and all the old palaces in Venice are full of old masters. I tell you Romanelli is ruined."

E: "Absolutely ruined. It was little Zacchi the dancer who spent his money for him."

F: "Not at all; it was a singer, Strozzi, the contralto. He followed her from town to town, and it was on that account that he had a quarrel with his uncle the Cardinal."

G: "There has never been either a dancer or a singer connected with Romanelli's ruin, and he has never had the least quarrel with his uncle the Cardinal. Roman-

elli is one of the best fellows going, and not in the least dissipated. There can be nothing more to his credit than the reason why he is somewhat pinched for money, for it doesn't amount to more than that. It is because he has almost stripped himself in order to give good dowries to his sisters, so that they might make suitable marriages. He gave, out of his own private fortune, six hundred thousand francs to the Duchesse de San Severino and eight hundred thousand to the Marquise de Rochemaure."

B: "San Severino and Rochemaure took their wives without any dowry, on account of their beauty and their high birth."

G: "You are still feeling sore about your mare. I tell you I know what I am talking about, and very few brothers would do for their sisters what Romanelli has done. There isn't a man anywhere more highly thought of than he."

B: "And he is trying to marry money."

G: "What if he is? He bears a fine old name and he looks for the means to sustain it. I congratulate in advance the future Princess Romanelli, whoever she may be, for she will have an honorable man for a husband."

H: "That is just the expression, a thoroughly honorable man."

Now this H is the oracle of the club, and his dictum is final. B essayed a few more grumbling remarks about his lame mare, but he was promptly suppressed and the subject was dropped.

Both Octave and I consider this highly satisfactory.

If this marriage comes off I shall be first, Princess Romanelli, second, sister-in-law to the Duchesse de San Severino; third, sister-in-law of the Marquise de Rochemaure; and fourth, niece of a Cardinal.

Niece of a Cardinal! I was delighted to hear of the Cardinal on mamma's account; she is very religious, and the knowledge of the Cardinal cannot fail to have an excellent effect upon her; besides, who knows if at the proper moment a word let fall at Rome, repeated at Paris, by the Nuncio, and conveyed to mamma by the director, the Abbé Noblet, might not have a decisive influence! Yes, my uncle the Cardinal may be very useful to us, and we shall probably need his services before we get through. Niece of a cardinal! Niece of His Eminence!

May 18th.

But now, how and where am I to meet him?

I went yesterday with mamma to hand in my account to Madame de Rutly. I had taken in nineteen hundred francs and the others only eight, six, or five hundred; I was well ahead of them all.

Madame de Rutly received us most cordially. She said she was at home every Wednesday evening, quite informally to her more intimate friends, and would be glad to see us. Mamma replied that she very seldom went out in the evening, and I understood that it was useless; I should never get mamma to Madame de Rutly's, and yet I knew the Prince would be there.

And how on earth am I to meet him? For I must have some talk with him. I can not go to papa and mamma and say, "Will you have the great kindness to

give me three or four millions at once? This is why: there is a certain Italian Prince who bought a rose from me on the thirteenth of May and another on the fourteenth. I have only exchanged a few casual remarks with him, but that is enough. I know he is willing, for three or four millions, to sell me the honor of being his wife, so I should be much obliged to you for that sum."

No, I can not go to mamma with any such story. I must be able to say something else; I know just what will be the only thing that will have any effect upon her, but to be able to say this with any appearance of truth I must have some conversation with this charming Prince who dropped from the clouds that night at the Circus in the Champs-Elysées.

May 19th.

Octave and I spent a full hour yesterday racking our brains without being able to think of any occasion where this interview could take place. It was then agreed that we should have another consultation today before dinner.

Octave made his appearance about six o'clock; Félicie was trying on a new ball-gown she had just finished for me. We have advanced since the day she first came to me, and my evening gowns are made frankly low-necked. Papa is on my side, so I have things as I like. The gown was of white muslin (I promised mamma) but it is cut low, and so Octave came in for the first view of my arms and neck.

He gave a little cry of admiration. "What a charming frock!" he said, but it was my shoulders he was looking at and not the frock. I looked in the glass. I

certainly am growing handsome; I feel my wings sprouting.

"For what ball is this frock?" said Octave.

"For that most melancholy of festivities—you don't go any more, but I have to—the Annual Ball of the Apprentices' Society."

"A subscription ball?" asked Octave.

"Yes, a subscription ball in the big hall at the Mairie."

"Saved, saved! I shall go to this ball."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

He cast a warning glance at Félicie. I dismissed her, and as soon as she had gone he said:

"Yes, I shall go to this ball, but not alone; I shall bring the Prince."

"The Prince! To the Apprentices' ball?"

That was all that I could say. The idea appeared perfectly insane.

"The Apprentices' ball! You don't know what it is. In all the rooms at the Mairie there are now busts with caps of liberty on their heads, and last year we danced a quadrille to patriotic airs such as the 'Marseillaise.'"

"The Prince will dance to those airs, and he will never even see the liberty caps, he will be so busy looking at you; and when he has seen you in that gown, with those shoulders and those eyes, he will be ready to take you without a cent. I have just been talking with him at the club and he is quite mad about you."

"Well," I replied, laughing, "if he is as bad as all that, try to bring him to the ball to-morrow night."

May 22d.

He did bring him. I arrived at half-past ten and the Prince was already there.

My entrance caused a positive sensation. How delightful it is to feel one's self lovely, and to know that wherever one goes one produces an effect. How happy actresses must be when a round of applause greets them as they step on the stage. I felt a little like that on the evening of the ball. As I passed through the room I heard a hum of admiration behind me, and as soon as I was seated I was surrounded by the usual flock of engineers, all eager to dance with me. They were soon dispersed, however, when Octave brought up the Prince to present to me.

The evening before mamma had been nearly paralyzed when Octave asked her for two tickets, one for himself and one for a friend, but she was positively thunderstruck to find that this friend was the man who had bought those two roses from me.

The tact and diplomacy of the Prince were wonderful. He was introduced to papa and mamma and began to talk to them. I suspect that he had prepared himself somewhat for this conversation, he said so many things that were calculated to gain papa's heart. He made two or three remarks about our large industries, the aristocracy of labor, etc., and papa, charmed of course, at once began upon his beloved paper. The Prince answered him with considerable knowledge of the subject, and he actually knew about the paper made of wood pulp.

But at last, after papa and mamma, my turn came,

and it was time. I had had the greatest difficulty in warding off the onslaughts of the youthful engineers. The Prince asked for the next quadrille, which I gave him, the next waltz, which I also gave him, and then for the rest of the dances, all of which I gave him. But we sat out many of those dances; sat and talked. How tactful and delicate he was! How perfectly he managed to convey to me, without a word that could embarrass me, the idea that he loved me! In the course of the evening he told me many interesting things about his family, which is of very ancient origin. There was a saint in the family in the fifteenth century, a real saint, properly canonized and all—that will please mamma tremendously.

He himself started in diplomacy when he was very young. He left it some years ago, but he should not be at all averse to going back into the service should some very good place be offered to him. Who knows? I may some day be Italian Ambassadress at Paris!

He talked a good deal of his uncle the Cardinal, who, it appears, is one of the lights of the Church—at the last Conclave he had four votes for being Pope. Goodness! to think of what may happen! I, Catherine Duval, daughter of a paper manufacturer, may one day be the niece of the Pope! Another good thing for mamma.

Mamma is one of the patronesses of the society and president of the committee of organization, consequently she had her hands full, and the Prince and I were left in peace, but about one o'clock she suddenly made her appearance in a great state of agitation. She had had

some difficulty in finding me, for I was sitting in a corner with the Prince.

"Catherine, my dear, come here for one moment;" and taking me to one side, and speaking very low, she said, "What is going on, my dear? I have just heard that you have been with this Prince the whole evening. Who is he?"

"He is a Prince, mamma."

"It seems that he has nothing to say to any one but you."

"Perhaps that is the reason why he came."

"On your account?"

"Yes, mamma. I will tell you everything to-morrow."

"What does that mean? Is there something for me to know?"

"There is, indeed."

Mamma wished to take me home, but I wouldn't go. I had promised to dance the cotillon with the Prince, and I did, and I never left until three o'clock in the morning, after the most delicious evening of my life.

Going home in the carriage, mamma and I did not exchange a word. Papa was there, and he suspected nothing. He also had had a delightful evening. He had sat in a corner enjoying my success, receiving congratulations upon my appearance, proud of the sensation his beloved daughter was making. He knew that I had danced all night with a Prince, but that did not displease him. It amuses papa to affect the Liberal a little in politics, but, nevertheless, he had listened with much satisfaction to the Prince's polite remarks. He is

not like mamma. He grumbles terribly when he has to pay Octave's debts, but I am sure that at heart he is not sorry to see his son going a little into fashionable society—in short, he was much flattered to think that there was only one Prince at the ball and that that Prince had eyes for no one but me.

When we got home, mamma came to my room for the promised explanation, but I begged her to wait until the next day.

And I really was worn out—agreeably so, but still worn out. I put myself into Félicie's hands and she undressed me and put me to bed. I did not close my eyes all night, but I was happy. I lost myself in a delicious dream which I feel will soon become reality. I ended by dozing a little, when suddenly I heard a voice say, "Mademoiselle!" It was Félicie; she had a note in her hand, it was from Octave, only four lines.

"Six o'clock in the morning.

"We left the ball together, and for the last two hours have been walking about talking of you: he can talk of nothing else. He loves you, he adores you; he never can love anyone else! I am going to bed. Good-night, Princess!"

An hour later mamma arrived, clamoring for an explanation, and so I made the plunge. I know mamma perfectly, and I know there is but one thing that can move her, so I declared that he loved me and that I loved him; that he was anxious to marry me, and that for my part my one desire was to be his wife. I added that he was poor, and gave the reason. I spoke of his generosity and devotion to his sisters, and told how he had sacrificed his fortune to insure their happiness.

"But who told you all this?"

"Octave. He is a friend of Octave's." And without giving mamma time to breathe I went on. I kept for the end of my discourse the saint of the fifteenth century and the Cardinal with his four votes for the Papacy at the last Conclave, and I could see that they had great effect. When I had finished, mamma could find nothing to say but "You wish to be a Princess!"

Then I had to fib a little, and I did, boldly.

"Why, no, mamma, I don't care about that. I only want to marry some one whom I love."

"You don't know him."

"I had only to see him, mamma. Forgive me, it was not my fault; it came to me without my knowing or wishing it."

I knew that this was the one argument which would have any weight with mamma. "I love him, and because I love him I wish to marry him." Not to move from that position was my best chance, and I did not move.

"You and papa married for love. How often has old Marguerite told me the story. You were poor and beautiful—they wanted papa to marry money, but he would not, he stood firm, and in the end he married you, and see how happy you have been!"

"But love does not come upon one like a clap of thunder."

"It must be so, mamma. Papa saw you and fell in love with you; I saw the Prince and fell in love with him."

"A Prince! Your father will never listen to such a thing—with his Liberal views."

"Oh, I will settle papa's Liberal views. Let me explain the thing to him and he will give his consent in five minutes."

"But you seem to believe that this Prince is really going to propose for you."

"He will do it to-day, mamma; within an hour if you are willing."

"I trust he has not actually made love to you."

"He has not said a single word to me, mamma, that you might not have heard, but nevertheless I am sure he adores me."

May 23d.

It will be hard, but I shall accomplish it. I have sent word to him by Octave not to move in the matter, but to leave everything to me. I only ask that if possible *our* uncle the Cardinal should send through the proper channel some little message to mamma.

I have had two or three long talks with papa. I don't take the trouble to be diplomatic, but confine myself to reiterating, "I love him! I love him! If I may not marry him I shall say nothing, but I shall never marry any one else, never, never!" And I begin to intimate my design of ultimately going into a convent.

Our meals are tragical. I have succeeded in looking wan and wretched. I am absent-minded. I don't seem to hear what is said to me; it is plain that my thoughts are elsewhere. I don't talk any more, and if I do speak it is only to reply in monosyllables, in a faint voice, to any questions. I don't eat anything. It is that above all that plunges papa and mamma in despair; they don't know of the slices of good roast beef

that Félicie brings me. I have resolved not to say another word—and I wait. I have full confidence in mamma's affection; she loves me too well to resist much longer.

May 28th.

Poor mamma! Poor papa! I am really too sorry for them, they are so unhappy. It is terrible to have to make them suffer so. They are ready to yield. I am never left alone with Octave, for they know very well he has been the chief promoter of this affair, but I found an opportunity to say to him yesterday, "Let Madame de Rutly come to see mamma."

She came to-day, and perhaps the message from the Cardinal came too, for after dinner (I had only taken a few spoonfuls of soup, and those with apparent effort) mamma said to me, "My dear child, we do not refuse to examine——"

"Oh, there is nothing to examine. You don't wish— That is quite right; I won't speak of it any more, but I shall die of it, that's all."

I threw myself upon a sofa and burst into tears—real tears, too, for I can cry whenever I want to. I used to do it when I was a child whenever I wanted anything very much, and it has been useful later in life.

So then papa (how good he is! I do love him!) cried, "There must be an end of this; I can not live any longer like this. Give the child her Prince!"

And it was in this way that I was allowed to accept a Prince, between nine o'clock and five minutes after, on this memorable 28th of May.

June 3d.

Everything is settled. Papa gives me two millions outright and allows me, besides, an income of a hundred thousand francs a year. Octave has behaved splendidly: he has asked nothing for himself; that might complicate matters. When the wedding is over he will have a clear field.

Mamma is in despair, but how little she knows me. I shall never be one of those girls who, once married into a higher sphere, never come to see their mothers except in the morning on the sly. I shall always be proud of mamma—she is very intelligent, still handsome, and has a fine figure. I shall make her leave Le Marais and buy a house near me, and also get a place near the chateau where the Prince and I are to pass the autumn. It was only yesterday that he said to me, "Your mother is really charming."

June 15th.

This morning at nine o'clock I was still in bed, half asleep, enjoying a most delicious dream—all my dreams are delicious, but my waking hours are still more so. I was still in this dreamy state when I felt on my forehead the kiss with which mamma wakes me every morning.

Dear mamma! I threw my arms around her neck and felt that the only drawback to my happiness was that she does not feel quite so well assured of my future as I do myself. This morning she had in her hand one of those Paris newspapers that I formerly used to unearth in papa's waste-basket.

"See here," she said, at the same time pointing out a short paragraph on the first page. This is what I read:

"*An Approaching Marriage in High Life. Prince Romanelli, head of the elder branch of one of the most illustrious families of the Italian nobility, is about to marry one of the most charming Parisiennes, Mademoiselle Duval, daughter of a millionaire paper manufacturer.*"

My eyes were actually dazzled. My name in a newspaper at last! For the first time but not for the last. But in the future the frightful name of Catherine Duval will be replaced by that of the Princess Romanelli.

June 18th.

The funniest thing about all this is that I am actually beginning to fall in love with him. As to him, he adores me, which is only his obvious duty. He introduced me the other day to his sister, the Marquise de Rochemaure. She was not exactly enthusiastic in her greeting of me, for which I shall pay her out later. Her position is all very well, but mine will be better.

June 24th.

The wedding is to come off two weeks from to-morrow, and not at our parish church in that dreadful Rue St. Antoine, but in the chapel at the Nonciature, and we are to have a bishop for the ceremony. Married by a bishop! One of my dreams!

July 8th.

It is done! I am his wife legally, but that miserable formality at the Mayor's office does not count; to-mor-

row is the day. We shall have, as well as the bishop, Widor at the organ and Faure and Talazac—the best there is, in fact. My gown is a marvel.

This is my last evening at Le Marais. For the last time I am alone at one o'clock in the morning in my own little room. We dined quietly together, all five of us—papa, mamma, the Prince, Octave, and I. After dinner I took a fancy to go and say good-by to the old garden which has so often seen me in despair. They were working all night in the shops; the rumbling of the machinery made the ground tremble lightly under my feet. I approached the little window which lighted the furnace-rooms; there were three stokers inside, their great bare arms black with the coal with which they were feeding the fires.

I felt my heart thrill with a sort of tenderness toward these brave fellows. If I am to become a princess tomorrow it is to them that I owe it. I thrust my hand through the bars of the window and emptied the contents of my portemonnaie—about ten louis—into the great black paw of one of the men. "For you three," I said, "in honor of my marriage."

"Oh, yes, we know. Thank you, Mademoiselle, and good luck to you."

He divided the money with his comrades, and they set to work again. Yes, my friends, work, and rest assured that henceforth the money that you gain will be spent to some purpose.

MADAME DERLINE

MADAME DERLINE

ON Friday, April 19th, Prince Agénor was quite beside himself at the opera during the second act of *Sigurd*. He made his way from box to box, and his enthusiasm increased as he progressed.

"That blonde! Oh, that blonde! She is ideal! Look at that blonde! Do you know that blonde?"

It was from the front part of Madame de Marizy's large first-tier box that all these exclamations were coming at that moment.

"Which blonde?" asked Madame de Marizy.

"Which blonde! Why, there is but one this evening in the house. Opposite to you, over there, in the first box, the Sainte Mesme's box. Look, Baroness, look straight over there——"

"Yes, I am looking at her. She is atrociously got up, but pretty——"

"Pretty! She is a wonder! Simply a wonder! Got up? Yes, agreed—some country relative. The Sainte Mesmes have cousins in Périgord. But what a smile! How well her neck is set on! And the slope of the shoulders! Ah, especially the shoulders!"

"Come, either keep still or go away! Let me listen to Madame Caron——"

The Prince went away, as no one knew that incomparable blonde. Yet she had often been to the opera, but in an unpretentious way—in the second tier of boxes. And to Prince Agénor above the first tier of boxes there was nothing, absolutely nothing. There was emptiness—space. The Prince had never been in a second-tier box, so the second-tier boxes did not exist.

While Madame Caron was marvellously singing the marvellous phrase of Reyer, "*O mon sauveur silencieux, la Valkyrie est ta conquête*," the Prince strolled along the *foyer* of the Opera. Who was that blonde? He wanted to know, and he would know.

And suddenly he remembered that good Madame Picard was the box-opener of the Sainte Mesmes, and that he, Prince of Nérins, had had the honor of being for a long time a friend of that good Madame Picard. It was she who in the last years of the Second Empire had taught him bezique in all its varieties—Japanese, Chinese, etc. He was then twenty, Madame Picard was forty. She was not then box-opener of the National Academy of Music; she had in those times as office—and it was not a sinecure—the position of aunt to a fair young person who showed a very pretty face and a very pretty pair of legs in the chorus of the *revues* of the Variétée. And the Prince, while quite young, at the beginning of his life, had, for three or four years, led a peaceful, almost domestic life, with the aunt and niece. Then they went one way and he another.

One evening at the opera, ten years later, in handing his overcoat to a venerable-looking old dame, Agénor heard himself saluted by the following little speech:

"Ah, how happy I am to see you again, Prince! And not changed—not at all changed. Still the same, absolutely the same—still twenty."

It was Madame Picard, who had been raised to the dignity of box-opener. They chatted, talked of old times, and after that evening the Prince never passed Madame Picard without greeting her. She responded with a little deferential courtesy. She was one of those people, becoming rarer and rarer nowadays, who have the exact feeling for distances and conventions. There was, however, a little remnant of familiarity, almost of affection, in the way in which she said "Prince." This did not displease Agénor; he had a very kind recollection of Madame Picard.

"Ah, Prince," said Madame Picard on seeing Agénor, "there is no one for you to-night in *my* boxes. Madame de Simiane is not here, and Madame de Sainte Mesme has rented her box."

"That's precisely it. Don't you know the people in Madame de Sainte Mesme's box?"

"Not at all, Prince. It's the first time I have seen them in the Marquise's box——"

"Then you have no idea——"

"None, Prince. Only to me they don't appear to be people of——"

She was going to say of *our* set. A box-opener of the first tier of boxes at the opera, having generally only to do with absolutely high-born people, considers herself as being a little of their set, and shows extreme disdain for unimportant people; it displeases her to receive these unimportant people in *her* boxes. Madame

Picard, however, had tact which rarely forsook her, and so stopped herself in time to say:

"People of *your* set. They belong to the middle class, to the wealthy middle class; but still the middle class. That doesn't satisfy you; you wish to know more on account of the blonde. Is it not so, Prince?"

Those last words were spoken with rare delicacy; they were murmured more than spoken—box-opener to a prince! It would have been unacceptable without that perfect reserve in accent and tone; yes, it was a box-opener who spoke, but a box-opener who was a little bit the aunt of former times, the aunt *à la mode de Cythère*. Madame Picard continued:

"Ah, she is a beauty! She came with a little dark man—her husband, I'm sure; for while she was taking off her cloak—it always takes some time—he didn't say a word to her. No eagerness, no little attentions. Yes, he could only be a husband. I examined the cloak. People one doesn't know puzzle me and my colleague. Madame Flachet and I always amuse ourselves by trying to guess from appearances. Well, the cloak comes from a good dressmaker, but not from a great one. It is fine and well made, but it has no style. I think they are middle-class people, Prince. But how stupid I am! You know Monsieur Palmer—well, a little while ago he came to see the beautiful blonde!"

"Monsieur Palmer?"

"Yes, and he can tell you."

"Thanks, Madame Picard, thanks——"

"Good-by, Prince, good-by," and Madame Picard

went back to her stool, near her colleague, Madame Flachet, and said to her:

"Ah, my dear, what a charming man the Prince is! True gentlefolks—there is nothing like them! But they are dying out, they are dying out; there are many less than formerly."

Prince Agénor was willing to do Palmer—big Palmer, rich Palmer, vain Palmer—the honor of being one of his friends; he deigned, and very frequently, to confide to Palmer his financial difficulties, and the banker was delighted to come to his aid. The Prince had been obliged to resign himself to becoming a member of two boards of directors presided over by Palmer, who was much pleased at having under obligations to him the representative of one of the noblest families in France. Besides, the Prince proved himself to be a *good prince*, and publicly acknowledged Palmer, showing himself in his box, taking charge of his entertainments, and occupying himself with his racing-stable. He had even pushed his gratitude to the point of compromising Madame Palmer in the most showy way.

"I am removing her from the middle class," he said; "I owe it to Palmer, who is one of the best fellows in the world."

The Prince found the banker alone in a lower box.

"What is the name—the name of that blonde in the Sainte Mesme's box?"

"Madame Derline."

"Is there a Monsieur Derline?"

"Certainly, a lawyer—my lawyer; the Sainte Mesme's lawyer. And if you want to see Madame Derline close

to, come to my ball next Thursday. She will be there——"

The wife of a lawyer! She was only the wife of a lawyer! The Prince sat down in the front of the box, opposite Madame Derline, and while looking at that lawyeress he was thinking. "Have I," he said to himself, "sufficient credit, sufficient power, to make of Madame Derline the most beautiful woman in Paris?"

For there was always a *most beautiful woman in Paris*, and it was he, Prince Agénor, who flattered himself that he could discover, proclaim, crown, and consecrate that most beautiful woman in Paris. Launch Madame Derline in society! Why not? He had never launched any one from the middle class. The enterprise would be new, amusing, and bold. He looked at Madame Derline through his opera-glass, and discovered thousands of beauties and perfections in her delightful face.

After the opera, the Prince, during the exit, placed himself at the bottom of the great staircase. He had enlisted two of his friends. "Come," he had said to them, "I will show you the most beautiful woman in Paris." While he was speaking, two steps away from the Prince was an alert young man who was attached to a morning paper, a very widely read paper. The young man had sharp ears, he caught on the fly the phrase of the Prince Agénor, whose high social position he knew; he succeeded in keeping close to the Prince, and when Madame Derline passed, the young reporter had the gift of hearing the conversation, without losing

a word, of the three brilliant noblemen. A quarter of an hour later he arrived at the office of the paper.

"Is there time," he asked, "to write a dozen lines in the *Society Note-book?*"

"Yes, but hurry."

The young man was a quick writer; the fifteen lines were done in the twinkling of an eye. They brought seven francs fifty to the reporter, but cost M. Derline a little more than that.

During this time Prince Agénor, seated in the club at the whist-table, was saying, while shuffling the cards:

"This evening at the opera there was a marvellous woman, a certain Madame Derline. She is the most beautiful woman in Paris!"

The following morning, in the gossip-corner of the Bois, in the spring sunshine, the Prince, surrounded by a little group of respectful disciples, was solemnly delivering from the back of his roan mare the following opinion:

"Listen well to what I say. The most beautiful woman in Paris is a certain Madame Derline. This star will be visible Thursday evening at the Palmers'. Go, and don't forget the name, Madame Derline."

The disciples dispersed, and went abroad spreading the great news.

Madame Derline had been admirably brought up by an irreproachable mother; she had been taught that she ought to get up in the morning, keep a strict account of her expenses, not go to a great dressmaker, believe in God, love her husband, visit the poor, and never spend but half her income in order to prepare dowries for her

daughters. Madame Derline performed all these duties. She led a peaceful and serene life in the old house (in the Rue Dragon) which had sheltered, since 1825, three generations of Derlines; the husbands had all three been lawyers, the wives had all three been virtuous. The three generations had passed there a happy and moderate life, never having any great pleasures, but, also, never being very bored.

The next day at eight o'clock in the morning Madame Derline awoke with an uneasy feeling. She had passed a troubled night—she, who usually slept like a child. The evening before at the opera, in the box, Madame Derline had vaguely felt that something was going on around her. And during the entire last act an opera-glass, obstinately fixed on her—the Prince's opera-glass—had thrown her into a certain agitation, not disagreeable, however. She wore a low bodice—too much so, in her mother's opinion—and two or three times, under the fixity of that opera-glass, she had raised its shoulder-straps.

So, after opening her eyes, Madame Derline closed them lazily, indolently, with thoughts floating between dreamland and reality. She again saw the opera-house, and a hundred, two hundred, five hundred opera-glasses obstinately fixed on her—on her alone.

The maid entered, placed a tray on a little table, made up a big fire in the fireplace, and went away. There was a cup of chocolate and the morning paper on the tray, the same as every morning. Then Madame Derline courageously got up, slipped her little bare feet into fur slippers, wrapped herself in a white cash-

mere dressing-gown, and crouched shivering in an arm-chair by the fire. She sipped the chocolate, and slightly burned herself; she must wait a little while. She put down the cup, took up the paper, unfolded it, and rapidly ran her eye over the six columns of the front page. At the bottom, quite at the bottom of the sixth column, were the following lines:

Last evening, at the opera, there was a very brilliant performance of "Sigurd." Society was well represented there; the beautiful Duchesse de Montaiglon, the pretty Countess Verdiniere de Lardac, the marvellous Marquise de Muriel, the lively Baroness de—

To read the name of the Baroness it was necessary to turn the page. Madame Derline did not turn it; she was thinking, reflecting. The evening before she had amused herself by having Palmer point out to her the social leaders in the house, and it so happened that the banker had pointed out to her the marvellous marquise. And Madame Derline—who was twenty-two—raised herself a little to look in the glass. She exchanged a slight smile with a young blonde, who was very pink and white.

"Ah," she said to herself, "if I were a marquise the man who wrote this would perhaps have paid some attention to me, and my name would perhaps be there. I wonder if it's fun to see one's name printed in a paper?"

And while addressing this question to herself, she turned the page, and continued reading:

—the lively Baroness de Myrvoix, etc. We have to announce the appearance of a new star which has abruptly burst forth in the

Parisian constellation. The house was in ecstasy over a strange and disturbing blonde, whose dark steel-gray eyes, and whose shoulders —ah, what shoulders! The shoulders were the event of the evening. From all quarters one heard asked, "Who is she?" "Who is she?" "To whom do those divine shoulders belong?" "To whom?" We know, and our readers will doubtless thank us for telling them the name of this ideal wonder. It is Madame Derline.

Her name! She had read her name! She was dazzled. Her eyes closed. All the letters in the alphabet began to dance wildly on the paper. Then they calmed down, stopped, and regained their places. She was able to find her name, and continue reading:

It is Madame Derline, the wife of one of the most agreeable and richest lawyers in Paris. The Prince of Nerins, whose word has so much weight in such matters, said yesterday evening to every one who would listen, "She is the most beautiful woman in Paris." We are absolutely of that opinion.

A single paragraph, and that was all. It was enough, it was too much! Madame Derline was seized with a feeling of undefinable confusion. It was a combination of fear and pleasure, of joy and trouble, of satisfied vanity and wounded modesty. Her dressing-gown was a little open; she folded it over with a sort of violence, and crossed it upon her feet, abruptly drawn back toward the armchair. She had a feeling of nudity. It seemed to her that all Paris was there, in her room, and that the Prince de Nérins was in front saying to all Paris, "Look, look! She is the most beautiful woman in Paris."

The Prince de Nérins! She knew the name well, for she read with keen interest in the papers all the articles

entitled "*Parisian Life*," "*High Life*," "*Society Echoes*," etc.; and all the society columns signed "*Mousseline*," "*Fanfreluche*," "*Brimborion*," "*Véloutine;*" all the accounts of great marriages, great balls, of great comings-out, and of great charity sales. The name of the Prince often figured in these articles, and he was always quoted as supreme arbiter of Parisian elegances.

And it was he who had declared—ah!—decidedly pleasure got the better of fear. Still trembling with emotion, Madame Derline went and placed herself before a long looking-glass, an old cheval-glass from Jacob's, which never till now had reflected other than good middle-class women married to good lawyers. In that glass she looked at herself, examined herself, studied herself, long, curiously, and eagerly. Of course she knew she was pretty, but oh, the power of print! She found herself absolutely delightful. She was no longer Madame Derline—she was the most beautiful woman in Paris! Her feet, her little feet—their bareness no longer troubled her—left the ground. She raised herself gently toward the heavens, toward the clouds, and felt herself become a goddess.

But suddenly an anxiety seized her. "Edward! What would Edward say?" Edward was her husband. There had been but one man's surname in her life—her husband's. The lawyer was well loved! And almost at the same moment when she was asking herself what Edward would say, Edward abruptly opened the door.

He was a little out of breath. He had run upstairs

two at a time. He was peacefully rummaging among old papers in his study on the ground-floor when one of his brother-lawyers, with forced congratulations, however, had made him read the famous article. He had soon got rid of his brother-lawyer, and he had come, much irritated, to his room. At first there was simply a torrent of words.

"Why do these journalists meddle? It's an outrage! Your name—look, there is your name in this paper!"

"Yes, I know, I've seen——"

"Ah, you know, you have seen—and you think it quite natural!"

"But, dear——"

"What times do we live in? It's your fault, too."

"My fault!"

"Yes, your fault!"

"And how?"

"Your bodice last night was too low, much too low. Besides, your mother told you so——"

"Oh, mamma——"

"You needn't say 'Oh, mamma!' Your mother was right. There, read: 'And whose shoulders—ah, what shoulders!' And it is of your shoulders they are speaking. And that Prince who dares to award you a prize for beauty!"

The good man had plebeian, Gothical ideas—the ideas of a lawyer of old times, of a lawyer of the Rue Dragon; the lawyers of the Boulevard Malesherbes are no longer like that.

Madame Derline very gently, very quietly, brought the rebel back to reason. Of course there was charm and

eloquence in her speech, but how much more charm and eloquence in the tenderness of her glance and smile!

Why this great rage and despair? He was accused of being the husband of the most beautiful woman in Paris. Was that such a horrible thing, such a terrible misfortune? And who was the brother-lawyer, the good brother-lawyer, who had taken pleasure in coming to show him the hateful article?

"Monsieur Renaud."

"Oh, it was Monsieur Renaud—dear Monsieur Renaud!"

Thereupon Madame Derline was seized with a hearty fit of laughter; so much so that the blonde hair, which had been loosely done up, came down and framed the pretty face from which gleamed the dark eyes which could also, when they gave themselves the trouble, look very gentle, very caressing, very loving.

"Oh, it was Monsieur Renaud, the husband of that delightful Madame Renaud! Well, do you know what you will do immediately, without losing a minute? Go to the president of the Tribunal and ask for a divorce. You will say to him: 'Monsieur Aubépin, deliver me from my wife. Her crime is being pretty, very pretty, too pretty. I wish another one who is ugly, very ugly, who has Madame Renaud's large nose, colossal foot, pointed chin, skinny shoulders, and eternal pimples.' That's what you want, isn't it? Come, you big stupid, kiss your poor wife, and forgive her for not being a monster."

As rather lively gestures had illustrated this little

speech, the white cashmere dressing-gown had slipped —slipped a good deal, and had opened, very much opened; the criminal shoulders were within reach of M. Derline's lips—he succumbed. Besides, he too felt the abominable influence of the press. His wife had never seemed so pretty to him, and, brought back to subjection, M. Derline returned to his study in order to make money for the most beautiful woman in Paris.

A very wise and opportune occupation; for scarcely was Madame Derline left alone when an idea flashed through her head which was to call forth a very pretty collection of bank-notes from the cash-box of the lawyer of the Rue Dragon. Madame Derline had intended wearing to the Palmers' ball a frock which had already been much seen. Madame Derline had kept the dressmaker of her wedding-gown, her mother's dressmaker, a dressmaker of the Left Bank. It seemed to her that her new position imposed new duties on her. She could not appear at the Palmers' without a frock which had not been seen, and stamped with a well-known name. She ordered the carriage in the afternoon, and resolutely gave her coachman the address of one of the most illustrious dressmakers in Paris. She arrived a little agitated, and to reach the great artist was obliged to pass through a veritable crowd of footmen, who were in the antechamber chatting and laughing, used to meeting there and making long stops. Nearly all the footmen were those of society, the highest society; they had spent the previous evening together at the English Embassy, and were to be that evening at the Duchesse de Grémoille's.

Madame Derline entered a sumptuous parlor; it was very sumptuous, too sumptuous. Twenty great customers were there—society women and actresses, all agitated, anxious, feverish—looking at the beautiful tall saleswomen come and go before them, wearing the last creations of the master of the house. The great artist had a diplomatic bearing: buttoned-up black frock-coat, long cravat with pin (a present from a royal highness who paid her bills slowly), and a many-colored rosette in his button-hole (the gift of a small reigning prince who paid slower yet the bills of an opera-dancer). He came and went—precise, calm, and cool—in the midst of the solicitations and supplications of his customers. "Monsieur Arthur! Monsieur Arthur!" One heard only that name. He was Monsieur Arthur. He went from one to another—respectful, without too much humility, to the duchesses, and easy, without too much familiarity, to the actresses. There was an extraordinary liveliness, and a confusion of marvellous velvets, satins, and embroidered, brocaded, and gold or silver-threaded stuffs, all thrown here and there, as if by an accident—but what science in that accident! —on armchairs, tables, and divans.

In the first place Madame Derline ran against a shopgirl who was bearing with outstretched arms a white frock, and was almost hidden beneath a light mountain of muslins and laces. The only thing visible was the shopgirl's rough black hair and sly suburban expression. Madame Derline backed away, wishing to place herself against the wall; but a tryer-on was there, a large energetic brunette, who spoke authoritatively in a

high staccato. "At once," she was saying—"bring me at once the Princess's gown!"

Frightened and dazed, Madame Derline stood in a corner and watched an opportunity to seize a saleswoman on the fly. She even thought of giving up the game. Never, certainly, should she dare to address directly that terrible M. Arthur, who had just given her a rapid glance in which she believed to have read, "Who is she? She isn't properly dressed! She doesn't go to a fashionable dressmaker!" At last Madame Derline succeeded in getting hold of a disengaged saleswoman, and there was the same slightly disdainful glance—a glance which was accompanied by the phrase:

"Madame is not a regular customer of the house?"

"No, I am not a customer——"

"And you wish?"

"A gown, a ball-gown—and I want the gown for next Thursday evening——"

"Thursday next!"

"Yes, Thursday next."

"Oh! Madame, it is not to be thought of. Even for a customer of the house it would be quite impossible."

"But I wish it so much——"

"Go and see Monsieur Arthur. He alone can——"

"And where is Monsieur Arthur?"

"In his office. He has just gone into his office. Over there, Madame, opposite."

Madame Derline, through a half-open door, saw a sombre and severe but luxurious room—an ambassador's office. On the walls the great European Powers were

represented by photographs—the Empress Eugénie, the Princess of Wales, a grand-duchess of Russia, and an archduchess of Austria. M. Arthur was there taking a few moments' rest, seated in a large armchair, with an air of lassitude and exhaustion, and with a newspaper spread out over his knees. He arose on seeing Madame Derline enter. In a trembling voice she repeated her wish.

"Oh, Madame, a ball-gown—a beautiful ball-gown—for Thursday! I couldn't make such a promise—I couldn't keep it. There are responsibilities to which I never expose myself."

He spoke slowly, gravely, as a man conscious of his high position.

"Oh, I am so disappointed. It was a particular occasion, and I was told that you alone could——"

Two tears, two little tears, glittered on her eyelashes. M. Arthur was moved. A woman, a pretty woman, crying there, before him! Never had such homage been paid to his genius.

"Well, Madame, I am willing to make an attempt. A very simple frock——"

"Oh, no, not simple. Very brilliant, on the contrary—everything that is most brilliant. Two of my friends are customers of yours [she named them], and I am Madame Derline——"

"Madame Derline! You are Madame Derline?"

The two *Madames Derline* were followed by a glance and a smile—the glance was at the newspaper and the smile was at Madame Derline; but it was a discreet, self-contained smile—the smile of a perfectly gallant man.

This is what the glance and smile said with admirable clearness:

"Ah! you are Madame Derline—that already celebrated Madame Derline—who yesterday at the opera—I understand, I understand—I was reading just now in this paper—words are no longer necessary—you should have told your name at once—yes, you need me; yes, you shall have your frock; yes, I want to divide your success with you."

M. Arthur called:

"Mademoiselle Blanche, come here at once! Mademoiselle Blanche!"

And turning toward Madame Derline, he said:

"She has great talent, but I shall myself superintend it; so be easy—yes, I myself."

Madame Derline was a little confused, a little embarrassed by her glory, but happy nevertheless. Mademoiselle Blanche came forward.

"Conduct Madame," said M. Arthur, "and take the necessary measures for a ball-gown, very low, and with absolutely bare arms. During that time, Madame, I am going to think seriously of what I can do for you. It must be something entirely new—ah! before going, permit me——"

He walked very slowly around Madame Derline, and examined her with profound attention; then he walked away, and considered her from a little distance. His face was serious, thoughtful, and anxious. A great thinker wrestling with a great problem. He passed his hand over his forehead, raised his eyes to the sky, getting inspiration by a painful delivery; but

suddenly his face lighted—the spirit from above had answered.

"Go, Madame," he said, "go. Your gown is thought out. When you come back, Mademoiselle, bring me that piece of pink satin; you know, the one that I was keeping for some great occasion."

Thus Madame Derline found herself with Mademoiselle Blanche in a trying-on room, which was a sort of little cabin lined with mirrors. A quarter of an hour later, when the measures had been taken, Madame Derline came back and discovered M. Arthur in the midst of pieces of satin of all colors, of crêpes, of tulles, of laces, and of brocaded stuffs.

"No, no, not the pink satin," he said to Mademoiselle Blanche, who was bringing the asked-for piece; "no, I have found something better. Listen to me. This is what I wish: I have given up the pink, and I have decided on this—this peach-colored satin. A classic robe, outlining all the fine lines and showing the suppleness of the body. This robe must be very clinging—hardly any underskirts. They must be of surah. Madame must be melted into it—do you thoroughly understand?—absolutely melted into the robe. We will drop over the skirt this crêpe—yes, that one, but in small, light plaits. The crêpe will be as a cloud thrown over the dress—a transparent, vapory, impalpable cloud. The arms are to be absolutely bare, as I already have told you. On each shoulder must be a simple knot, showing the upper part of the arm. Of what is the knot to be? I am still undecided—I need to think it over—till to-morrow, Madame, till to-morrow."

Madame Derline came back the next day, and the next, and every day till the day before the famous Thursday; and each time that she came back, while awaiting her turn to try on, she ordered frocks, very simple ones, but yet costing from seven to eight hundred francs each.

And that was not all. On the day of her first visit to M. Arthur, when Madame Derline came out of the great house, she was broken-hearted—positively broken-hearted—at the sight of her brougham; it really did make a pitiful appearance among all the elegant carriages which were waiting in three rows and taking up half the street. It was the brougham of her late mother-in-law, and it still rolled through the streets of Paris after fifteen years' service. Madame Derline got into the woe-begone brougham to drive straight to a very well-known carriage-maker, and that evening, cleverly seizing the psychological moment, she explained to M. Derline that she had seen a certain little black coupé lined with blue satin that would frame delightfully her new gowns.

The coupé was bought the next day by M. Derline, who also was beginning fully to realize the extent of his new duties. But the next day it was discovered that it was impossible to harness to that jewel of a coupé the old horse who had pulled the old carriage, and no less impossible to put on the box the old coachman who drove the old horse.

This is how on Thursday, April 25th, at half-past ten in the evening, a very pretty chestnut mare, driven by a very correct English coachman, took Monsieur and

Madame Derline to the Palmers'. They still lacked something—a little groom to sit beside the English coachman. But a certain amount of discretion had to be employed. The most beautiful woman in Paris intended to wait ten days before asking for the little groom.

While she was going upstairs at the Palmers', she distinctly felt her heart beat like the strokes of a hammer. She was about to play a decisive game. She knew that the Palmers had been going everywhere, saying, "Come on Thursday; we will show you Madame Derline, the most beautiful woman in Paris." Curiosity as well as jealousy had been well awakened.

She entered, and from the first minute she had the delicious sensation of her success. Throughout the long gallery of the Palmers' house it was a true triumphal march. She advanced with firm and precise step, erect, and head well held. She appeared to see nothing, to hear nothing, but how well she saw! how well she felt the fire of all those eyes on her shoulders! Around her arose a little murmur of admiration, and never had music been sweeter to her.

Yes, decidedly, all went well. She was on a fair way to conquer Paris. And, sure of herself, at each step she became more confident, lighter, and bolder, as she advanced on Palmer's arm, who, in passing, pointed out the counts, the marquises, and the dukes. And then Palmer suddenly said to her:

"I want to present to you one of your greatest admirers, who, the other night at the opera, spoke of nothing but your beauty; he is the Prince of Nérins."

She became as red as a cherry. Palmer looked at her and began to laugh.

"Ah, you read the other day in that paper?"

"I read—yes, I read——"

"But where is the Prince, where is he? I saw him during the day, and he was to be here early."

Madame Derline was not to see the Prince of Nérins that evening. And yet he had intended to go to the Palmers' and preside at the deification of his lawyeress. He had dined at the club, and had allowed himself to be dragged off to a first performance at a minor theatre. An operetta of the regulation type was being played. The principal personage was a young queen, who was always escorted by the customary four maids-of-honor.

Three of these young ladies were very well known to first-nighters, as having already figured in the tableaux of operettas and in groups of fairies, but the fourth—Oh, the fourth! She was a new one, a tall brunette of the most striking beauty. The Prince made himself remarked more than all others by his enthusiasm. He completely forgot that he was to leave after the first act. The play was over very late, and the Prince was still there, having paid no attention to the piece or the music, having seen nothing but the wonderful brunette, having heard nothing but the stanza which she had unworthily massacred in the middle of the second act. And while they were leaving the theatre, the Prince was saying to whoever would listen:

"That brunette! oh, that brunette! She hasn't an equal in any theatre! She is the most beautiful woman in Paris! The most beautiful!"

It was one o'clock in the morning. The Prince asked himself whether he should go to the Palmers'. Poor Madame Derline! she was of very slight importance beside this new wonder! And then, too, the Prince was a methodical man. The hour for whist had arrived; so he departed to play whist.

The following morning Madame Derline found ten lines on the Palmers' ball in the "society column." There was mention of the marquises, the countesses, and the duchesses who were there, but about Madame Derline there was not a word—not a word!

On the other hand, the writer of theatrical gossip celebrated in enthusiastic terms the beauty of that ideal maid-of-honor, and said, "*Besides, the Prince of Nérins declared that Mademoiselle Miranda was indisputably the most beautiful woman in Paris!*"

Madame Derline threw the paper in the fire. She did not wish her husband to know that she was already not the most beautiful woman in Paris.

She has, however, kept the great dressmaker and the English coachman, but she never has dared to ask for the little groom.

THE MINISTER FROM PEKIN

THE MINISTER FROM PEKIN

AT the beginning of the year 1870 a number of French and English residents had been massacred in China. Reparation was demanded. His Excellency Tchong-Keon, Tutor of the Heir-apparent and Vice-President of the War Department, was sent to Europe as Ambassador Extraordinary to the French and English governments.

Tchong-Keon has recently published at Pekin a very interesting and curious account of his voyage. One of my friends who lives in Shanghai, and who possesses the rare accomplishment of being able to read Chinese, sent me this accurate translation of a part of Tchong-Keon's narrative.

HAVRE, *September* 12, 1870.

I land, and I make myself known. I am the Ambassador of the Emperor of China. I bear apologies to the Emperor of the French, and presents to the Empress. There is no Emperor and no Empress. A Republic has been proclaimed. I am much embarrassed. Shall I offer the apologies and the presents to the Republic that were intended for the Empire?

HAVRE, *September* 14, 1870.

After much consideration, I shall offer the apologies and keep the presents.

HAVRE, *September* 26, 1870.

Yes; but to whom shall I carry the apologies, and to whom shall I present them? The Government of the French Republic is divided: one part is in Paris and one part in Tours. To go to Paris is not to be thought of. Paris is besieged and blockaded by the Prussians. I shall go to Tours.

HAVRE, *October* 2, 1870.

I did not go, and I shall not go, to Tours. I received yesterday a visit from the correspondent of the *Times*, a most agreeable and sensible man. I told him that I intended going to Tours.

"To Tours! What do you intend to do in Tours?"

"To present the apologies of my royal master to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the French Republic."

"But that minister is not in Tours."

"Where is he?"

"Blockaded in Paris."

A Minister of Foreign Affairs blockaded in a besieged town seemed to me most extraordinary.

"And why," the correspondent of the *Times* asked me, "do you bring apologies to the French Government?"

"Because we killed some French residents."

"French residents! That is of no importance nowadays. France no longer exists. You may, if you choose, throw all the French residents into the sea."

"We also thoughtlessly killed some English residents."

"You killed some English residents! Oh, that is very different! England is still a great nation. And you have brought apologies to Queen Victoria?"

"Yes, apologies and presents."

"Go to London, go straight to London, and don't bother about France; there is no France."

The correspondent of the *Times* looked quite happy when he spoke those words: "There is no France."

LONDON, *October* 10, 1870.

I have seen the Queen of England. She received me very kindly. She has accepted the apologies and the presents.

LONDON, *October* 12, 1870.

I have had a long conversation with Lord Granville, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Queen of England. I explained to his Excellency that I intend to go home at once, and that I feel I need not pay further attention to my French embassy, as France no longer exists. Lord Granville answered me:

"Do not go away so soon; you will perhaps be obliged to return, and sooner than you imagine. France is an extraordinary country, which picks up very quickly. Await the end of the war, and then you can take your apologies to the government that France will have decided on giving itself. Till then remain in England. We shall be most happy to offer you our hospitality."

LONDON, *November* 3, 1870.

I did not return to China. I am waiting in London till the Minister of Foreign Affairs is not besieged, and until there is a way of laying one's hands on the French Government. There are many Parisians here who escaped from their country on account of the war. I dined yesterday with his Royal Highness, the Prince

of Wales. Three Parisian women, all young and pretty, took possession of me after dinner. We had a very interesting conversation in English.

"You are looking for the French Government, the legitimate Government?" said the first of these Parisians. "Why, it is here in England, half an hour from London. To-morrow go to the Waterloo station and buy a ticket for Chiselhurst, and there you will find Napoleon III, who is, and never has ceased to be, the Emperor of the French."

"Don't listen to her, Monsieur," laughingly said the second Parisian, "don't listen to her; she is a terrible Bonapartist. Yes, the true sovereign of France is in England, quite near London, but not at Chiselhurst; and it is not the Waterloo station you must go to, but the Victoria station. You must not take a ticket for Chiselhurst, but for Twickenham, and there you will find at Orleans House his Royal Highness the Comte de Paris."

"Don't listen to her, Monsieur," exclaimed in turn, and also laughing, the third Parisian, "don't listen to her; she is a terrible revolutionist! The Comte de Paris is not the heir to the throne of France. To find the legitimate King you must go a little farther than Chiselhurst or Twickenham; you must go to Austria, to the Frohsdorf Palace. The King of France—the descendant of Henry IV—is the Comte de Chambord."

If I count aright, that makes three legitimate sovereigns, and all three deposed. Never in China have we had anything of that sort. Our old dynasty has had to fight against the invasions of the Mongols and against

the insurrections of the Taipings. But three legitimate sovereigns for the same country, for a single throne! One has to come to Europe to see such things.

However, the three Parisians gayly discussed the matter, and seemed to be the best friends in the world.

LONDON, *November* 15, 1870.

As a sequel to the three Frenchwomen, representing three different monarchs, I met, this evening, at Lord Granville's, three Frenchmen representing three different republics.

The first asked me why I had not gone to Tours.

"You will find there," he said to me, "the authorized representatives of the French Republic, and in addressing yourself to Monsieur Gambetta you are addressing France——"

"Don't do that, Monsieur Ambassador!" exclaimed the second Frenchman; "the real Government of the real French Republic is shut up in Paris. Monsieur Jules Favre alone can officially receive your visit and your apologies."

"The Republic of Paris is not worth more than the Republic of Tours," the third Frenchman then told me. "Should we have a Republic in France, it will be neither the Republic of Monsieur Gambetta nor the Republic of Monsieur Jules Favre."

"And whose Republic, then?"

"The Republic of Monsieur Thiers——"

Whereupon the three Frenchmen began to dispute in earnest. They grew very red, shouted loudly, and made violent gestures. The discussion about the three mon-

archies had been much gentler and much more agreeable than the discussion about the three republics.

During the evening these Frenchmen managed to slip into my ear, in turn, two or three little phrases of this kind:

"Don't listen," said the first, "to that partizan of the Government of Paris; he is a lawyer who has come here with a commission from Monsieur Jules Favre. So you see he has a large salary, and as he wishes to keep it——"

"Don't listen," said the second, "to that partizan of the alleged Republic of Monsieur Thiers; he is only a monarchist, a disguised Orleanist——"

"Don't listen," said the third "to that partizan of the Republic of Tours; he has come to England to get a loan for the benefit of the Government of Tours; so, as he expects to get a great deal of money——"

Thus I am, if I reckon correctly, face to face with six governments—three monarchies and three republics.

LONDON, *December* 6, 1870.

I think that his Excellency, M. de Bernstoff, Prussian Ambassador to England, takes pleasure in making fun of me. I never meet him that he does not announce to me that Paris will capitulate the next day. The next day arrives and Paris does not capitulate. However, this evening his Excellency looked so perfectly sure of what he was saying that I think I may prepare to return to Paris.

PARIS, *February* 20, 1871.

I left England on the 10th of February. At last I am in Paris. I travelled slowly, by short stages. What a number of burned villages! What a number of sacked

houses, to say nothing of devastated forests, dug-up woods, and bridges and railroads destroyed! And these Europeans treat us as barbarians!

However, among all these ruins there is one the sight of which filled me with the keenest joy. The palace of Saint-Cloud was the summer palace of the Emperor Napoleon, and not one stone remains upon another. I contemplated curiously, eagerly, and for a long time the blackened ruins of this palace. Pieces of old Chinese vases were hidden in the heaps of rubbish among the wreck of marble and fragments of shell.

Where did those old Chinese vases come from? Perhaps from the summer palace of our Emperor, from that palace which was sacked, burned, and destroyed by those English and French soldiers who came to bring us civilization.

I was extremely well received by the English, who overwhelmed me with invitations and kindnesses; but none the less I hope that the palaces of Buckingham and Windsor will also have their turn.

PARIS, *February* 25, 1871.

I have written to M. Jules Favre to let him know that I have been waiting six months for the opportunity of presenting to him the compliments and apologies of the Emperor of China. M. Jules Favre answered me that he is obliged to start for Bordeaux. I shall have an audience in the beginning of March.

PARIS, *March* 7, 1871.

Another letter from M. Jules Favre. He is expected at Frankfort by M. de Bismarck. My audience is again postponed.

PARIS, *March* 17, 1871.

At last, to-morrow, March 18th, at four o'clock, I am to be received by M. Jules Favre at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

PARIS, *March* 18, 1871.

We dressed ourselves, I and my two secretaries, in our official costumes, and departed at three o'clock, accompanied by an interpreter. We arrived. The court of the house was filled with people who appeared busy and hurried, and who came and went, carrying cases and packages. The interpreter, after exchanging several words with an employé of the ministry, said to me:

"Something serious has happened—an insurrection. The Government is again obliged to change its capital!"

At that moment a door opened, and M. Jules Favre himself appeared with a large portfolio under his arm. He explained to the interpreter that I should have my audience at Versailles in a few days, and having made me a profound bow, which I returned him, he ran away with his large portfolio.

VERSAILLES, *March* 18, 1871.

I had to leave Paris at twelve o'clock in a great hurry. There really is a new Government at Paris. This Government is not one of the three monarchies, nor one of the three republics. It is a seventh arrangement, which is called the *Commune*. This morning troops of armed men surrounded the house where I live. It seems that the new Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Paris of the Commune would have been charmed to re-

ceive a Chinese ambassador. They had come to carry me off. I had time to escape. It is not the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris that I should see, it is the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Versailles.

Good heavens, how complicated it all is! And when shall I be able to put my hand on this intangible person, who is now blockaded in Paris and then chased out of Paris?

VERSAILLES, *April* 6, 1871.

At last, yesterday, I had the honor of being received by his Excellency, and we discussed the events that had occurred in Paris.

"This insurrection," M. Jules Favre said to me, "is the most formidable and the most extraordinary that ever has broken out."

I could not allow so great an historical error to pass. I answered M. Jules Favre that we had had in China for millions of years socialists and socialistic uprisings; that the French Communists were but rough imitators of our Chinese Taipings; that we had had in 1230 a siege at Nankin which had lasted seven years, etc. In short, these Europeans are only beginning again our history with less grandeur and more barbarity.

VERSAILLES, *May* 15, 1871.

My mission is ended; I could return to China but all that I see here interests me extremely. This civil war immediately succeeding a foreign war is a very curious occurrence. There is here, for a Chinaman, an excellent opportunity to study, on the spot and from life, European civilization.

LUDOVIC HALÉVY

VERSAILLES, *May* 24, 1871.

Paris is burning, and on the terrace of the palace of Saint-Cloud, in the midst of the ruins of that palace, I passed my day looking at Paris burn. It is a dead, destroyed, and annihilated city.

PARIS, *June* 10, 1871.

Not at all. It is still the most beautiful city in Europe, and the most brilliant, and the most gay. I shall spend some time in Paris.

PARIS, *June* 20, 1871.

Yesterday M. Thiers, in the Bois de Boulogne, held a review of a hundred thousand men. Will there always be a France?

MADEMOISELLE DE LÉOTY

MADEMOISELLE DE LÉOTY

November 25, 1882.

O-DAY I was struggling with one of Beethoven's sonatas, when the door opened, and who should enter but mamma. It is something surprising to see mamma up at this hour, to say nothing of being dressed for the street, with her bonnet and mantle. I don't remember ever having seen her do such a thing before. Mamma never can manage to go to Ste.-Clotilde on Sundays before the middle of the one o'clock mass, and one day she said laughingly to our good curé, Abbé Pourtal, "Our religion, my dear Abbé, would be absolutely perfect if we could only have a two o'clock mass; it would be especially convenient in winter."

I was consequently amazed at seeing mamma at this hour, and asked her whether she was going out.

"No, my dear, I have just come in."

"Just come in?"

"Yes, I have been out doing some errands; I had to purchase some worsteds for my fancy-work; you know that blue which is almost impossible to match."

"And did you match it?"

"No, but they have promised to send it to-morrow or the next day, at latest; that is——"

Mamma appeared somewhat confused in her remarks, which in truth grew a trifle complicated as she wound up by saying we were to go that evening to a little *musicale* at the Mercereys'. She had known that three days and had forgotten to tell me of it!

I did not say anything, but as I listened I speculated as to what all this meant, this matching of samples, this *musicale* at the Mercereys'. Mamma certainly appeared a little confused.

I let her go on without saying a word. After she had finished her little discourse she made a sort of stage exit, then came back and said, carelessly; "What frock shall you wear this evening?"

"This evening, mamma? Oh, I don't know, my gray frock, or my blue—or perhaps my pink."

"No, no! not the pink frock; put on your blue one—you looked so well yesterday at your Aunt Clara's in that blue gown. And then your father does not like the pink one, and as he is to go with us this evening——"

"Papa is to go with us this evening to the Mercereys'?"

"Yes."

"And does he know there is to be music?"

"Yes; is there anything astonishing in that?"

"No, nothing whatever."

And thereupon mamma departed, leaving me to my own reflections, whereat, without a moment's hesitation I said to myself, "It is a question of a marriage; I am to

be shown to some one, and that is the reason why papa is going."

Poor papa! Dragged by mamma to an evening gathering where there is to be music! Things are indeed topsy-turvy. There are only three things that papa really enjoys in the evening: the club, the ballet at the Opera, and the theatres where they give amusing plays —the theatres where young girls can not go, but where I shall pass many an evening when I am married.

Yes, I am to be inspected, I am sure of it. And it must be a wonderfully important inspection, for mamma is in the greatest state of agitation about it. She has eaten hardly any breakfast, she can not sit still. She has written to Madame Loisel to beg her to come *in person* this evening, to arrange my hair. She has herself made sure that my blue frock is in perfect order; she has looked me over with great care, and is in despair because she has discovered a small spot on my face.

"My dear, what is that?" she cried.

"What, mamma?"

"On the end of your nose?"

"Is there something on the end of my nose?"

"There is, indeed, a deep mark."

I rush to a mirror with my heart in my mouth. I breathe again, however, for nothing is visible but a tiny scratch from one of Bob's velvety paws; by this evening not a trace of it will remain.

This small pink mark assumes, in mamma's eyes, the proportions of a terrible wound. Never has the end of my nose been the object of such touching solicitude. Mamma insisted upon my spending the rest of the day

in an armchair, with cold water compresses arranged like a pair of spectacles upon the tip end of my little nose.

Poor mamma! she is so anxious that I should marry. And that is very natural; she was a beauty, and is still very effective in the evening, and it is a great bore to have to drag about with her a girl old enough to be married.

I don't like it either. I know how much older it makes her appear to have me always with her, so when we go out together I manage to get away from her soon after entering the drawing-room, and arrange to be with her as little as possible during the evening. We both go our own way, without troubling the other.

Mamma is really very good. There are many mothers who are always tormenting their daughters about marriage and who make them decide in five minutes, without really giving them time to know their own minds. Mamma is not like that.

She knows that I am resolved not to make a hasty choice. Marriage is no joke; if a mistake is made it is for life; it is worth while thinking about beforehand. I intend to make a sensible marriage. I have no notion of falling in love at first sight, with some young man either dark or fair, and insisting upon it to mamma that he is the one person in the world for me. That is not my idea in the least.

Last spring I refused no less than five offers; those gentlemen were all very well in their way, but did not seem to me to be quite what I had a right to expect, either in birth or in fortune. This winter I shall show

the same deliberation and prudence. I am in no haste; I am not yet twenty, so I can afford to wait.

The day that I was eighteen I purchased a blank-book with a lock, and on the first page I wrote: "My Marriage." I have already seen five candidates bite the dust, and I feel certain that the turn of a sixth will come this evening. Is it he who is destined to become my most humble and obedient lord and master? In any case he must be prepared to undergo a searching examination. I am not like mamma; I do not lose my head easily.

November 26th, 4 P.M.

I was not mistaken; it was a question of a sixth. But let us proceed in order, and note down in due succession the events, both great and small, of yesterday evening.

After dinner mamma and I went upstairs to dress. I must admit I took a good deal of pains about my appearance, and it was only at the end of an hour or more that I descended. All the doors were open, and, as I approached the library, I heard papa say to mamma, "You consider it really necessary, then?"

"Absolutely," mamma replied; "your presence is indispensable."

The temptation was too strong and I stopped to listen; never was there a more pardonable indiscretion.

"Why indispensable?" rejoined papa; "I know this young man; I have met him often at the club, and have even played whist with him—he plays a rather good game, too. He saw Irene on horseback yesterday and found her charming; that is all very well, but what have I to do with it? It concerns you and Irene."

"My dear, I assure you it is absolutely necessary——"

"Very well, very well, I will go."

And then silence. I waited to hear the name, my heart throbbing meanwhile, but in vain. I remained there a few moments before entering the room, for I did not wish to seem to know anything.

I know one important thing, however: *he* belongs to the Jockey Club, and that to me was very important. If I attach too much weight to that fact it is papa's fault; if a man does not belong to the Jockey Club he does not exist for papa. According to his views, the world of society begins with those who belong to it, and ends with those who do not. I was brought up with these ideas; consequently my husband must belong to the Jockey Club.

We got into the carriage—papa melancholy enough at the prospect of a musical evening, mamma quite excited, I apparently unmoved but really considerably puzzled.

What was the object of all this mystery? This gentleman had seen me the day before on horseback, had been charmed with my appearance; was it he who had requested to see me by gaslight and in evening dress?

This did not seem to me quite the thing. *He* should have been submitted to my examination, not I to his. However——

At half-past ten we arrived at the Mercereys'. Alas! poor papa, it was indeed a *musicale*, and one of the most advanced description—a stringed quartette, which

is always severe upon those who are not accustomed to such forms of pleasure.

Very few persons were there, only about twenty—a curious sort of assembly, which bore the marks of haste and improvisation; the guests did not know one another, and many seemed to have been invited to fill up. Not but that it is a much harder thing to arrange a successful small party in November than in May; one must take what one can get then.

We arrived simultaneously with the *andante* of the sonata, so that we had to make our way in on tiptoe. I subsided as soon as possible into a corner, whence I surveyed the field of battle. Here and there were scattered occasional men, elderly or middle-aged, bald or gray, none that could interest me.

But in the opposite corner was a group of three or four young men; no doubt about it—there the enemy was to be found!

But which is he? I reason it out in the following manner: it is the one who looks at me with the greatest interest; so I lower my eyes modestly and fall into the attitude of a good little girl who has given herself up to the somewhat austere pleasure of listening to a sonata by Haydn.

Suddenly I raise my eyes, and my glance falls directly upon the group of young men; but I am obliged to lower them more quickly than I raised them, for all four are gazing at me with evident curiosity and no less evident pleasure. I let the sonata go on a little longer and then try it again; same result; always those four pairs of eyes fastened upon me.

I was not altogether unworthy of this scrutiny. The country had agreed with me this summer; I had gained just enough flesh to look well. Virginie, my maid, said to me the other evening, while helping me to dress, "Mademoiselle has no idea how she has improved this summer." In which she was mistaken; Mademoiselle is perfectly well aware of it—was, in fact, the first to notice it.

The sonata came to an end at last, and, taking advantage of the hum of conversation that at once followed, I took mamma aside and said to her, "Mamma, do tell me which one it is."

"You don't mean to say you have guessed it!"

"Indeed I have; but quick! which one? The music is about to begin again."

"Well, it is the tall, dark man, at the left, standing under the Meissonier. Don't look that way, he is looking at you."

"He isn't the only one who is doing that."

"There, he has looked away; he is speaking to your father."

"He is not so bad."

"Indeed he is not!"

"His mouth is rather large."

"I don't think so."

"Oh, yes, mamma! but the general effect is good."

"And if you only knew! His birth and fortune are everything that could be desired. It is a most fortunate coincidence."

"What is his name?"

"The Comte de Martelle-Simieuse. Don't look at

him, he is looking this way again. Yes, he is one of the Martelle-Simieuses and they are cousins of the——"

The music began again and the flow of mamma's eloquence was cut short. We seated ourselves, and while apparently listening to one of Mozart's quartettes, I gave myself over to reflection. Certainly this young man must be a most desirable person, for mamma seemed to be in a state of actual exaltation.

Comtesse de Martelle-Simieuse! A double name! it has always been my dream. I should have preferred being a duchess, but there are so few genuine dukes nowadays—only twenty-two, I believe—that the chances are too small. I will be content with a count.

Martelle-Simieuse! the name has a good sound. I repeated it to myself, not listening in the least to the music. Was that really Mozart they were playing? To me the four instruments seemed to be singing a song, of which the refrain was "Comtesse de Martelle-Simieuse."

A name is so important; one that goes well with the title; for a title is as necessary as a membership in the Jockey Club. Not even a fortune from the Arabian Nights would induce me to marry beneath me. Comtesse de Martelle-Simieuse! Yes, the name is excellent.

The quartette ended. Papa approached mamma and so did I. No sooner had I reached her when she exclaimed, "Things are progressing rapidly; he wishes to be presented to me, and your father noticed that his voice actually trembled. Isn't that true?"

"Yes," said papa, whose spirit was already crushed

by the classical character of the music to which he had been compelled to listen.

"Your father is about to bring him up and present him to me. If he pleases you, stay by my side; if not, do not remain."

"I will stay, mamma, but you must give me time to consider. Remember, you promised not to hurry me."

"You shall be perfectly free to choose, but listen to me first. This is really a most desirable marriage; if you knew his connections—his mother was a Précigny-Laroche, think of that! There is no better family in France!"

"I know it, mamma, but do not get excited. People are looking at us."

Papa had gone to find the Count; he returned with him at this moment, and between two pieces of music we four managed to have a little conversation.

The Count was perceptibly embarrassed. He who from afar had gazed upon me so bravely lost his self-possession when confronted with me. It was I who was obliged to direct the conversation, and I managed to do so with so much skill that in spite of its trivial nature I contrived to learn, inside of ten minutes, sundry things most important to know before going any further.

He likes Paris above all places; so do I. The country bores him, as it does me. Trouville he enjoys; so do I. Above all, he has no fondness for shooting—that horrible shooting which is a positive martyrdom for us women, taking from us our husbands and their friends, and returning them to us in the evening, tired, dirty, and stupid.

On the other hand, he is devoted to hunting, just as I am. That is another thing, for we women can join in that. How often have I said to myself, "My husband must keep a pack of hounds"; and he has a pack for boar-hunting—he hires a forest from the State about ten miles from Paris. You leave town about half-past eight in the morning from that most convenient of stations, the Northern, and are on horseback by half-past ten. And unless the run is exceptionally long, you are back in Paris in time for the theatre or a ball.

This is not all; he is completely his own master; he has no father or mother, and only one brother, younger than himself, who is in the army; then he has an aunt, a very rich old lady who has no children, so he is the head of the family.

Martelle-Simieuse belongs to him. It is a property somewhere in La Vendée. It is needless to say that I have no intention of burying myself in La Vendée for six or eight months of every year. But if one must have a country-seat, La Vendée does very well; there is no better air anywhere.

I learned all this inside of ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, because Madame de Mercerey, seeing all of us engaged in conversation—not that papa said anything or mamma very much—was good enough to prolong the interval between the two quartettes.

All these interesting facts I learned in the most easy and natural way, by a simple turn given to the conversation and without having asked a single question.

Mamma said to me this morning that I positively frightened her by my calm way of looking at things.

That is because of my practical side; there are certain conditions of independence and security with which I wish to surround my life; without those there is no happiness, no love, nothing.

For instance, no mother-in-law! I do not know what I would not sacrifice in order to have no mother-in-law; no contention, no friction. A woman then has her belongings to herself, beginning with her husband.

That was the reason why last spring I would not accept the Marquis de Marillac, one of the five. He was very nice and as amusing as possible; I was really beginning to grow quite fond of him when I met his mother—and I stopped at once.

She was a terrible woman; severe, melancholy, given over to religious observances of the strictest nature, and one who would insist upon her daughter-in-law burying herself in the country with her for eight months of the year. It would be economical, I know, but what slavery! Why marry at all if one does not at least gain one's freedom thereby?

Where was I? Oh, I remember now. The music began again, the last piece; we were seated in the following order: myself, mamma, papa, and the Count. It was hardly an hour since I had seen him for the first time, and here we were like a family party already, sitting in an absurd row against the wall.

The next thing on the programme was a *suite* of Beethoven's waltzes, with intervals of about a minute after each waltz. During the first of these intervals mamma said to me, "Well, now that you have seen and spoken to him, what is your impression of him?"

"The same as before, mamma."

"Good?"

"Not bad."

"Then your father may ask him to dinner?"

"Isn't that rather quick work?"

"We must be quick."

"Why, mamma?"

"Hush, they are beginning again."

I was somewhat puzzled. Why this necessity for haste? It looked as if I were being thrown at the man's head; I could hardly wait for the end of the waltz to find out what it all meant. At last, thanks to heaven! the second interlude arrived, and I besought mamma to explain the mystery to me.

"I can not tell you now," she said; "it would take too long; as soon as we go home you shall know all about it; but the invitation must be given this evening; there is no time to lose—yes or no, which shall it be?"

"Very well, then."

"To dinner on Thursday?"

"Thursday be it."

Between the third and fourth waltzes, mamma said rapidly to papa, "Invite him to dinner."

"On what day?"

"Thursday."

"Very well."

Papa—I never had seen him before in the part of a serious parent—was admirable in his sweetness and resignation. It is true that he was so overwhelmed by the classical music he had been obliged to listen to that he did not seem to have any very clear idea of what he

was about, and I was afraid he might invite the wrong person; but no, he gave his invitation correctly and it was accepted with enthusiasm.

We departed about midnight, and we had hardly left the house when I said, "Mamma, I can see you are dying to have me make this match."

"I admit it, my dear."

"But why?"

"Let me breathe for a moment and then I will tell you—as soon as we get home."

An hour afterward I knew the whole story, and a most extraordinary one it is. Yesterday morning, at eight o'clock, mamma received this note, marked "*In haste*," from Madame de Mercerey: "I have a headache and can not go out; come to me at once. It concerns Irene's future."

Mamma was in bed when this reached her, but she arose at once and went to Madame de Mercerey's. But it is now dinner-time, and this must be continued in our next.

November 27th.

As I was saying, mamma flew to Madame de Mercerey, and this is what she learned there.

The two Martelle-Simieuses, the elder, Adrien—that is, mine—and the younger, Paul, lost ten years ago their paternal grandmother, an excellent woman, very rich and a little odd, whose ruling idea was the perpetuation of the family. It seemed to her that the end of all things would be at hand if the race of Martelle-Simieuse should disappear from the face of the earth. Not being in the least stupid, she inserted in her will an ingenious

clause. She set aside a million francs from her estate; this million with its accumulated interest was to go to her grandson Adrien if he were married by the time he was twenty-five; in case he was not married at that age the money should go to her grandson Paul, on the same conditions; and if both of them obstinately remained bachelors, the money, principal and interest, was to go to the poor.

By this time this sum of money amounted to fifteen hundred thousand francs. Adrien, however, had no desire to be married; passionately fond of horses, hunting, and sports of all kinds, he jealously cherished his independence. "Why should I marry?" he said; "I have a hundred and eighty thousand francs a year, and with a little care that is plenty." So he saw the approach of his twenty-fifth birthday with perfect tranquillity; but he reckoned without events.

Toward the end of last year there was a craze for speculation in Paris society, a sort of financial crusade against the unbelievers. Adrien threw himself into this movement more from a desire to assist his friends than from any particular wish to make money.

The poor fellow, however, was unfortunate, and lost fourteen hundred thousand francs; he had left only one hundred and twenty thousand a year, and in consequence he was pinched from morning until night. He put a good face on the matter, however, selling some of his horses, and reducing his establishment generally.

His resolution not to marry remained unchanged, but for the past month his friends had been lecturing him on the folly of letting so much money escape; he need only

find a pretty girl with some money, and all this trouble would be over.

He weakened finally, and authorized his cousin, Madame de Riémens, to look for some suitable match. She looked, and found Catherine de Puymarin, who is frightfully rich and also frightfully thin. Adrien's first cry was, "She is too thin and rides too badly." From the moment of resigning himself to marrying, he insisted upon that one thing: his wife should be a good horsewoman.

Time went on, however; he was harassed and troubled; he had begun by saying "No" to the match, now he said neither "No" nor "Yes," and would probably have drifted into saying "Yes," when the great, the decisive twenty-fourth day of November arrived.

On that day, instead of riding in the afternoon, as I usually do, I went out in the morning with Mr. Coates, the riding-master, who considered me one of his best pupils, and who often made the round of the Bois with me.

I left home at ten o'clock in the coupé with Miss Morton, and at the entrance of the Bois Mr. Coates was waiting for me. The groom had brought Triboulet, who is not the quietest of animals at best, and who was more lively than usual, not having been out of his stall for forty-eight hours. I had dressed in a great hurry, and Virginie had had time only to braid my hair in two heavy plaits and pin them up hastily with a dozen pins.

Mr. Coates helped me to mount, not without some difficulty, for Triboulet was acting like one possessed; as soon as he felt me on his back he began to rear, but I

have a firm seat and I know Triboulet's weak points. I administered a slight correction, in the middle of which I felt something rolling over my shoulders, and lo! my hair had come down, dragging my hat off with it; so there I was, bareheaded, with my hair flying, and Triboulet dancing about only half subdued.

At this moment, Adrien, Comte de Martelle-Simieuse, appeared on horseback from one of the bridle-paths. He stopped, dazzled at the sight, at a respectful distance, and passed in a moment of time through three phases of admiration.

The first for the rider: "How well she looks on horseback!"

The second for my hair: "What magnificent hair!"

The third for my face: "By Jove! How very pretty she is!"

At last Triboulet was quieted. The groom managed to find five or six of my hairpins in the sand and I fastened up my hair as well as I could, tying my hat on firmly with my veil.

Finally we started, Mr. Coates and I; behind us at a little distance came the groom, and behind the groom, also at a little distance, the heir of the Martelle-Simieuse family, taking another turn around the Bois in my honor!

For my part, in my innocence I had no suspicion of this brilliant conquest. The weather was clear and cold and we went at a rapid pace. Triboulet, stimulated by the keen air, tried to rebel two or three times, but he soon found with whom he had to deal. Mr. Coates was much pleased with my riding that morning.

"You ride like an angel to-day," he said. Which seems to have been the opinion of my unexpected attendant also.

"How well she rides!" he kept saying to himself, comparing me at the same time with Catherine de Puymarin.

Having finished our ride, I rejoined Miss Morton in the coupé, and we started for home with young Martelle-Simieuse in hot pursuit. He caught up with us as we reached the house, just in time to see the carriage drive in; he saw that I lived in a good house in an excellent locality, and that, according to all appearances, I was not an adventuress.

But what was the name of this intrepid amazon? Then a simple idea occurred to him, and, going home, he found a directory and looked up 49 Rue de Varennes—Baron de Léoty.

That is how he discovered the name of her who may prove to be the sharer of his fortunes. Baron de Léoty —he knew papa at the club, but was it papa's daughter whom he had seen? He resolved to penetrate this mystery.

That was very soon done, for by a curious chance he dined that evening informally with the Mercereys, and in one of the pauses of the conversation he asked Madame de Mercerey if she knew M. de Léoty.

"Intimately," she replied.

"Has he a pretty daughter of about twenty?"

At this it seems there was a general cry of enthusiasm: he was the only one there who did not know me, and he was greatly pitied. Madame de Mercerey asked the

reason for all these questions, and he described the incident of the morning, dwelling upon my good riding, my hair flying in the wind, the ray of sunshine that fell upon the group of horse and rider—in short, he became absolutely poetic, to the general amazement of all present, to whom this phase of his character was quite unknown.

It was then that Madame de Mercerey displayed the most admirable presence of mind. To begin with, she is very fond of mamma and hates the Puymarins; that is, she has hated them for the past six weeks and for fairly good reasons.

The Puymarins entertained three different sets of people this year at Grandchamps; in one set were the Orléans princes, in another the Grand Duke Vladimir, and the third set consisted largely of nobodies. Well, the Mercereys were asked with this last set; and persons so well-born and so rich as the Mercereys should not be asked with the nobodies; hence their reasonable resentment.

And now observe this stroke of genius on the part of Madame de Mercerey! Seizing the opportunity without a moment's hesitation, before her amazed husband she announced that they were to have a few friends the next evening, among them Madame de Léoty and her daughter, and M. de Simieuse must come and meet them, if the prospect of a little music did not frighten him. M. de Mercerey was bewildered.

"Are you not mistaken, my dear?" he said; "are we not going to-morrow evening to the Gymnase to hear Feuillet's new play?"

"No, my dear, that is the day after."

"I thought it was for to-morrow I got seats, however——"

He said no more, and after dinner Madame de Mercerey explained matters to him; she did not stop there, but got hold of M. de Simieuse and treated him to a long panegyric on the subject of my virtues.

"Irene de Léoty is the very woman for you; your seeing her this morning was actually providential."

As for him, he kept repeating mechanically, "How well she rides!"

Yesterday, after seeing mamma, Madame de Mercerey, in spite of her headache, started on the war-path, raked up some guests, hunted up the musicians, and actually had programmes printed. There never was such energy.

On what a little thing Fate sometimes hangs! If Virginie had fastened my hair up securely, if Triboulet had been quiet and gentle, if the Puymarins had invited the Mercereys to meet the Grand Duke Vladimir, M. de Simieuse would not be dining here to-morrow and I should not have this momentous question to decide: "Shall I or shall I not become the Comtesse de Martelle-Simieuse?"

Alas! the poor Puymarins, who came to town expressly to show their beloved Catherine! Shall I give her back her young man or shall I keep him myself? I can not say yet, but there is little doubt that number six has begun fairly well, and if I were obliged to make a bet on the matter I should say the odds were about even.

November 30th, 10 A.M.

The day has come at last when I must decide about this matter. For the past three days we have had interminable discussions about yesterday's dinner. Should it be a large or a small affair? Where was he to sit, next me or opposite? Mamma was in favor of opposite; she maintains that my full face is better than my profile, especially when I am in a low bodice, and my bodice was low, lower than it was on the evening at the Mercerey's —a delicate gradation!

But for my part, I preferred to sit next him; I did not feel in the least embarrassed and I wished to talk to him, to make him talk to me; I was determined to do nothing in haste—so he was placed next me.

In order not to be too hungry and take up my valuable time in eating, I had a substantial meal at five o'clock, and at the same time went over in my mind those topics upon which I wished him to talk.

We were at table an hour and a half, at the end of which I was convinced we were made for each other.

We began with horses and carriages; it was just the thing to start on, and I soon discovered that our tastes in such matters are absolutely identical. He does not like to see horses harnessed in long traces or trained to step very high. He was a little astonished, I think, to find me so well up in such matters.

He was astonished and charmed at the same time. At the beginning of the dinner he appeared a little embarrassed, but as soon as we began to talk he became quite at ease. We speak the same language, we understand each other perfectly.

He has a pack of eighty full-blooded hounds for boar-hunting. He gave me a minute description of his hunting-costume: a warm brown, with pockets and facings of blue velvet. I am sure I could get up a charming costume for myself in those two colors; I can think this minute of an enchanting little cocked hat that would suit me admirably.

If only my dear friend Cécile could find a husband with a pack of stag-hounds not too far from Paris, how happy we should be! I could hunt the stag with her and she could enjoy boar-hunting with me. But here I am talking as if M. de Simieuse were already my husband, and his eighty hounds mine.

There is another thing in his favor. As a general thing, we girls are condemned to marry men living perfectly idle lives, and that is the reason why so many of our young married people are so bored, and so tired of one another. Now M. de Simieuse is very busy; he has not a minute to himself. He is on the board of managers of a very select little club that has just been started; he is on the committee of the Gun Club and the Skating Club; he is interested in a society for steeplechasing, and is part owner of a racing-stable; these matters keep him well occupied.

At the end of half an hour I knew all this, after which I made a few inquiries as to his political views. I was resolved to have no delusions on that score. Poor mamma has gone through such trials on this subject that I wished to know what was before me.

Mamma has been very happy with papa, with the one exception of politics. She married when she was

very young, and papa's family, like her own, were monarchists, one and all.

But toward the end of 1865 papa became reconciled to the Empire, more from the kindness of his heart than anything else; he did it for the sake of his brother, my Uncle Armand, who is now a general. At that time, however, he was only a captain, and had been for a long time; he was not promoted for the simple reason that papa, in spite of many advances, never had consented to set foot inside the Tuileries.

Finally, however, papa, who adored Uncle Armand, accepted an invitation thither, and promised that mamma should accompany him. That was a regular triumph for the Empire, for there is no better blood in France than mamma's.

The day of this presentation at the Tuileries mamma passed in tears. She had to go, but there was a dreadful scene in the landau on the way there. At the last moment she revolted, and even attempted to get out of the carriage, in her white satin slippers and her wreath of roses, in the very middle of the Pont Royal, while two inches of snow were on the ground. She resigned herself, however, at last, and Uncle Armand was decorated a fortnight after, and was made head of the squadron inside six months. But after that several houses were closed to papa and mamma: papa did not mind that and was even secretly pleased, for he hates society, and his club still remained to him; but mamma adores going out, and she is not a member of the Jockey Club, so it was a little hard on her.

Nearly all those houses have been opened to us since

the Republic, for many things have been forgotten; nearly all those houses are open to us, I say, but not quite all. All shall open their doors wide to me, however, when I am the Comtesse de Martelle-Simieuse. Everywhere I shall be welcome, for the politics of the Martelle-Simieuse family have been absolutely irreproachable since the beginning of the century. They have not varied an iota under two Empires.

The family can be traced easily to the fourteenth century, and it can be proved that Adrien (I call him Adrien, though perhaps it is a little premature) is the third Count in France.

Of course such things are of minor importance when compared with nobleness of heart and a fine character, and all that, still they do count for a good deal in life. Especially just at present, when such a host of Spanish dukes and Italian princes has swept over the land and insist, although our origin is indisputable, on taking precedence of us. I really do not think that I could endure, at some great dinner, being relegated to the end of the table with the bankers and the literary people.

One thing more troubled me. There are certain arrangements one should look to when it is a question of one's future. Mamma has a box at the Opera every Monday, and it has always been settled between us that when I should marry we should share it, I taking it one Monday, mamma the next.

But there still remained Tuesdays for the Français. Goodness only knows how mamma has struggled to get a box at the Français for Tuesdays, but none was to be had. She could have had one on Thursdays, but she

would not take it; the play is the same but the audience is vastly different. Well, if I marry Adrien I shall have, every Tuesday, from December to June, a first-tier box at the Français!

This is the way of it. He has a dear old aunt, childless, very old and very rich (he is her heir, by the way) and very asthmatic, who owns this box, who is more than willing to hand it over to him, as she has not been to the theatre for three years. Can a more delightful aunt be imagined?

All this I got out of him between the soup and the ices, and when after dinner mamma fell upon me and said, "Well?" I replied, "I really think, mamma, it would be hard to do better."

"You have decided, then?"

"It takes two, mamma, you know, to make a match."

"So far as that goes, my dear, you are the one to decide. I watched him during dinner; his head is positively turned."

I was quite of her opinion. While mamma was talking to me he had precipitated himself upon Madame de Mercerey, who naturally made one of the party. It was I whom he loved, whom he adored, and he begged Madame de Mercerey to lose no time in making the formal demand for my hand.

She had some difficulty in quieting him and representing that things could not go on at such a rate. I verily believe that mamma would have been glad to settle things that very evening, she is in such terror of the Puymarin faction.

I did not share this fear. I was perfectly well aware

of the effect I had produced, and felt myself mistress of the situation. So I reminded mamma of her promise not to hurry me and of my resolve to decide only after mature consideration.

I had seen him only twice, both times in evening dress, and I wished to see him in a frock-coat; so Madame de Mercerey arranged an accidental meeting for to-day at three o'clock at the Louvre, precisely in front of Murillo's Madonna.

Same day, 5 P.M.

We have just come in. We walked for an hour through the galleries, without paying much attention to the pictures, I must confess. I should say, moreover, that he was in a state of heathen darkness as to the merits of paintings, but that is of no consequence, as I never intended to marry an art critic. He has a fine figure, dresses well, talks little, but intelligently; in short, I am satisfied.

As soon as we were once more in the carriage I had to quell mamma's ardor again.

"He is charming," she said; "have you decided?"

"Not yet, mamma; one does not marry simply because of suitability of fortune and rank."

"But what more do you want, my dear?"

"I must see him on horseback. He has seen me on horseback, but not I him."

So Madame de Mercerey, whose devotion has been simply inexhaustible, will advise him to loiter on horseback about ten o'clock to-morrow morning around the entrance of the Avenue des Acacias. She will delicately give him to understand that he will run a very good

chance of meeting papa and me. For papa amazes me; he is really admirable in his *rôle* of head of the family; he has not been on a horse for four years, and yet, at the risk of some frightful calamity, he consents to accompany me to-morrow.

November 30th.

We made the tour of the Bois, he, papa, and I. He rides perfectly; he rode a beautiful sorrel mare. I shall take it for my own use and let him have Triboulet, of whom I am a little tired.

As soon as I got home I threw my arms around mamma's neck and said, "Yes, a thousand times, yes!" And I thanked her over and over again for having been so indulgent and patient, for not having worried me, and for having given me so much time for reflection.

December 4th.

To-day, at three o'clock, his old aunt, the aunt of the box at the Français, is coming to make the formal demand, and before the tenth of January (it is necessary on account of that whim of his grandmother) I shall be Comtesse de Martelle-Simieuse. Adrien will get his fifteen hundred thousand francs and me into the bargain, which strikes me as money very agreeably gained. I can not see that he is in the least to be pitied.

December 11th.

The marriage is fixed for the sixth of January. It is absurd to be married so near New-Year's Day, it looks as if one were soliciting presents; but it must be, on account of the grandmother's whim, and when I come

to think of it, it is not so bad, after all. We shall make a short bridal tour, a week or ten days at Nice, perhaps, not more.

After which, Paris—Paris in the height of the season, with all those little theatres open that papa so delights in. That unfortunate Louise de Montbrian was married last spring toward the end of May; they took a trip of six weeks, and by the time they returned, Paris was hot and deserted and the Variétés had closed! She did not hear Judic until she had been married seven months!

I have no doubt whatever that we shall be perfectly happy. He adores me, and I? well, I should not be telling the truth if I represented myself as unhappy during his absence, trembling at the sound of his footstep, and otherwise conducting myself like the heroine of an English novel. No, I am not quite so inflammable as all that, but I already feel much friendship and affection for him, and love will doubtless come later.

For it is really great economy when love exists in a household. I bring him a million francs, so we can count upon about two hundred and thirty thousand a year, a sum which seems enormous, but really is not. We must allow eighty thousand francs a year to keep up Simieuse, our château, and for the hunting expenses; there remains, then, a hundred and fifty thousand to live on—plenty if we are fond of each other, if we like to do the same things, if we are content to walk along the pathway of life shoulder to shoulder, like good comrades.

On the other hand, if after some time—and this is the history of too many married persons nowadays—we should decide each to go his own way, we should have only seventy-five thousand a year apiece, and that would mean pinching. Take, for instance, the theatre, which, not counting the Opera or the Théâtre Français, costs two or three thousand francs a year, if the husband and wife go together to see the new plays; if they go separately the price is at once doubled; and it is the same way with everything.

For example, there are Caroline and her husband, who have only a hundred thousand a year, and who live easily without any need of economy—why? Because they are devoted to each other; they have a small house which needs only a small staff of servants; they do not entertain much and go out very little; the more they see of each other the better pleased they are, and Caroline is perfectly contented to dress on ten thousand francs a year.

And, on the other hand, there is Christine, poor child! Her mother was dazzled by the prospect of seeing her daughter a duchess, and Christine consented with the greatest reluctance. Such a title is a good deal, to be sure, but it is not everything, and the marriage has turned out most disastrously. They are absolutely pinched with their income of two hundred and fifty thousand francs; she spends enormous sums on dress and expensive whims, for it is much more expensive to have the whole world to please than one person. The Duke has taken to high play and has already lost half his fortune.

It was only lately that Caroline said to me, "When you are married, try to love your husband; in our rank it means a saving of a hundred thousand a year, and it is consequently a duty as well as a pleasure."

Yes, indeed, I will love him. Besides, this is only the eleventh of December; I have twenty-six days yet before the sixth of January.

STUDENTS OF SOCIETY

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ON a bright afternoon in April, seated upon a bench in the vestibule of one of the most fashionable modistes in Paris, were two little grooms talking together. Both wore the same correct livery: black coat, buckskin breeches, and top-boots. The two little fellows were old friends, having been at school together, and they had marched proudly in the same battalion on the fourteenth of July, with their little guns on their shoulders, their small swords clanking, and their caps worn on one ear, feeling as important as any of the men in the regular regiments. They had lost sight of each other for two or three years, until one Tuesday evening, when they found themselves face to face under the peristyle of the Théâtre Français.

"Why, Emil!"

"Why, Prosper!"

"Not Emil any more."

"Nor am I Prosper. I'm Bob, now."

"And I, Tom. You see, Tom was the name of the Duchess's last groom, and as she was used to it she called me Tom."

"You are with the Duchess, then?"

"Yes, and a real one. You know there are duchesses and duchesses, but mine is the real thing," and Tom pronounced the name of one of the oldest families of France.

"Oh, I know the Duke. A tall, fair man, isn't he?"

"Yes, that's the one."

"He comes to our house sometimes."

"Your house? Where's that?"

"Where I am living. You must know my mistress. Her picture is in all the shop-windows." And Bob mentioned the name of a very pretty and successful opera-singer, whose performances were the delight of the young men about town.

"Do I know her? Not only her pictures but I've seen her play. And so the Duke visits her?"

"Once in a while, not very often. I oughtn't to have spoken of it. Don't say I said so."

"Don't be afraid; I shan't tell the Duchess. And how does it happen you're called Bob now?"

"Well, I'll tell you. When I first came to Madame, she asked me what my name was, and when I told her, she said that wouldn't do at all. You see, Prosper was the name of Madame's latest adorer, and it would have made trouble to be always calling 'Prosper, do this,' or 'Prosper, go there.'"

"Yes, of course."

"And then it wouldn't have been at all the thing, the same name for the two of us, so Madame called me Bob, after her brown poodle that had run away the week before."

"It's funny, isn't it, that we should meet like this—

both of us grooms in good places, with real swells for mistresses, even though they are not in the same set?"

Bob and Tom had no time for more. The curtain had just fallen on the fifth act of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Their two mistresses, both "real swells, though not in the same set," came slowly down the stairway muffled in their furs. The boys separated, and rushed out to call up their mistresses' carriages.

They met a few days after, however, in the vestibule of one of the most fashionable modistes of Paris, and then often at the theatres while waiting for the end of the performance. But it was chiefly at the dressmaker's that they had most time to chat, for both ladies made long visits there; and, at that place, one fine April afternoon, they had a long and particularly animated conversation.

"Well," began Tom, "it seems your new piece has made a great hit."

"I believe you. I was in the front row in the gallery the first night—Madame gave me a ticket. There's a waltz song in it that was encored four times."

"Four times?"

"Yes, four times, and I can tell you that doesn't happen often. I know the song well. When I have taken Madame to rehearsal I have slipped into the theatre; the doorkeeper knows me, so I get into a dark corner and watch the rehearsals. They're lots of fun. You should see Madame make the stage-manager and the authors stand around. They had a great row last month over the piece Madame is singing in now. I was in my dark corner and saw it all. They were just

setting the scene for the third act—you know what that means?"

"Oh, yes. My uncle is gasman at the Châtelet and he sometimes lets me in to the rehearsals."

"Well, Madame was rehearsing, and the stage-manager and the two authors were on the stage—one was a little old man, and one was a young fellow. The old one suddenly said to Madame, 'Now you go to the left.' 'Why?' said she. 'Because it looks better.' 'I don't agree with you.' 'Yes, it does.' And then they went at it! Madame was determined to stay at the right. She is tremendously firm. The old fellow got very angry, and said, 'There, that will do. I tell you to go to the left and you shall go to the left. I am the author, and I ought to know how the play is to be done, and you are simply unbearable.' With that, Madame fires up and says, 'What did you say?' 'That you are simply unbearable and I have had enough of all this.' 'And I have had too much. Take your *rôle* and find somebody else to play it, for I won't.' And with that she fired her *rôle* right in the old fellow's face."

"Her *rôle?*"

"That's the paper that's got what she says copied on it."

"Oh, yes."

"And then the old fellow cried out, 'You insult me, Madame, and I won't stand it.' Then Madame picked up her skirts and skipped out, and I after her to see if I couldn't get to the street first. I caught up with her at the stage-door; she was rushing along, and after her came the stage-manager, the prompter, and the other

author, the young chap who hadn't said anything so far, but he somehow had the air of being on Madame's side. And they were all trying to calm her and saying, 'Now, my dear,' and 'Now, see here, Margot'—her name is Marguerite, but the people at the theatre and all her friends call her Margot."

"Margot—ah, now I understand something I heard the other day."

"What was it?"

"Oh, nothing of any importance. Go on about the theatre."

"Well, Madame Margot—we call her that, too, downstairs—just went on without answering, past the office, where the doorkeeper, Madame Charles, asked, 'What's the matter—is there a fire?' and at last the five of us reached the sidewalk—Madame, the stage-manager, the prompter, the young author, and myself. She jumped into her coupé and told me to shut the door and get up on the box; she was very pale and her teeth were set. I tried to shut the door; but I couldn't, for the manager held it, and said to Madame, 'My dear, be reasonable; you can't leave us in this fix—we can't get along without you. Come and finish the rehearsal.' And the others said, 'Come, my dear, now do!' By this time quite a crowd had collected; so when the manager begged so hard, Madame said, 'Well, I will go back on one condition, and that is that he apologizes.' 'Yes, he will apologize; only come back.' 'No, he must come here and apologize; I shall not get out until he does.' 'What here on the sidewalk? Impossible.' 'Very well. To the Bois, Bob!' I tried to get up on the box, but the

manager held me by the arm and wouldn't let me. So, finally, seeing that Madame was determined, the prompter said, 'Well, go and fetch him,' and Madame called out after them, 'I give you five minutes. If he is not here in five minutes I shan't wait.' Off they went to get the old fellow, and Madame threw herself back in a corner of the carriage and waited. She was raging. I stood near the door and I could hear her tapping with her foot on the carriage-floor. She has a very little foot, you know."

"It isn't any smaller than that of the Duchess, I'll wager anything you like."

"Well, never mind that now. There was Madame with her eyes fixed on the little clock in the carriage. The five minutes were nearly up when the old fellow appeared in the doorway, walking as stiff as a poker between the stage-manager and the prompter. He looked as if he had just been arrested. I felt proud of Madame when I saw how she made them all stand around, for the old fellow had a medal—I forgot to tell you that. He came up to the carriage-door and made his apology, pale with anger, and the others whispering to him what to say. At last everything was arranged, and just as Madame had her foot on the carriage-step she said, 'There's one thing more that I want understood, and that is that I shall *not* go to the left, I shall stay at the right.' The old gentleman gave a little jump, but the manager squeezed his arm; so he said 'Very well, have it as you please'; and he was right, for Madame never would have given in, and the piece would have been a failure without her. It was only the

other day I took Madame a vermouth while the hairdresser was there, and he was telling her what a success the piece had been, and how every one said it was owing to her."

"That's so. There was a big dinner at our house day before yesterday—thirty people. When there are over fifteen I help wait, and it's great fun to hear them talk. The table looks so fine with the flowers and silver, and the women with their diamonds and low dresses, just as low as the actresses at the theatre. I like all that. I couldn't stand living with plain people. I like fashionable people, or else an actress like your mistress. She looks like a real good sort."

"She is. She gets angry once in a while, but she doesn't stay so. And she puts on no airs; some actresses do, but not Madame. She isn't the least bit ashamed of her mother, who comes in from the country every once in a while and brings her fresh eggs. Madame has bought her a little place in the country, and she sells chickens and eggs. No, Madame isn't the least stuck up."

"Well, at this dinner I was telling you of, the Comte de Bonnelles and the Marquis de Vallières were there."

"I know them both. They are friends of Madame's and come to the house. I remember Monsieur de Bonnelles gave me twenty francs on New-Year's Day and the other not a cent."

"Just the way with me. They both came down to our place in the country last autumn for the coursing matches; and when they left, Monsieur de Bonnelles gave me twenty francs, but the other gave me nothing."

"I heard Madame say he was dead broke."

"Well, at the dinner there was a Russian princess, who sat between those two; a princess who goes in for theatricals and acts for nothing, you know; and while I waited on them I could hear them talking about your piece and what a success it was; and they said to the Princess, 'You will sing the waltz song for us after dinner, won't you?' And she said, 'Before the Nuncio? Never!' 'Oh, he always goes early,' said the others."

"What is the Nuncio?"

"Why, he is the ambassador of the Pope."

"Oh, yes, the Pope."

"This dinner was in honor of the Nuncio. He sat at the Duchess's right hand, and it was on that account that she wore her dress a little higher than usual. It was he who had officiated at the marriage of the Duchess. Monsieur de Bonnelles and Monsieur de Vallières spoke a little too loud, and I saw the Duchess make a little sign to them which meant that it wasn't the thing to talk about comic opera before Monseigneur. He is a priest, you know, but not quite like other priests. He can dine out with ladies in full dress, but he can't listen to comic songs."

"And did the Princess sing the song after he left?"

"Yes, and now that you say they call your mistress Margot, I can understand what the men meant. When they left I was in the anteroom helping them on with their coats, and one of them said, 'She did it very well, but not equal to Madame Margot'; and the others all said, 'No one can equal Margot'; and they all went out saying, 'Margot forever!'"

"They were right; no one comes up to her. And what a hit she has made! You can't even get near the box-office. Day before yesterday Madame said to me, 'Bob, go down to the theatre and to the other ticket-agencies and see whether you can get, at any price, a box for to-night; at any price, mind you.' It was for a great swell, a foreigner, a Royal Highness, for we have such visitors as well as you. I went everywhere, and there was nothing whatever to be had for either gold or silver. There never was such a hit, and they have doubled Madame's salary. She used to get three hundred francs and now she has six."

"A month?"

"A night. And she was so pleased that she raised all our wages twenty francs a month. She is a real good sort, and then she likes me. When I open the door I know when to say she's in and when to say she's out, and I never make any mistakes. And besides, she says I should make a good actor."

"You!"

"Yes. This is how it happened. When she goes to rehearsal I usually contrive to slip in after her, so I know all her songs and just how she sings them. So, often downstairs at dessert they say, 'Come, Bob, give us one of Madame's songs,' and then I sing. One day, after lunch, I sang one of her songs and they all laughed and applauded, and cried, '*Encore!*' Madame was in the room just above, with two friends who had lunched with her; one was a Secretary of Legation and the other was a tremendously rich Spaniard. In the midst of all the applause, we heard Madame's bell ring three times;

that was for Virginie, her maid. 'You are making too much noise,' she said, as she went upstairs; 'depend upon it, that is why Madame has rung.' We quieted down and pretty soon Virginie came back and said, 'Bob, Madame wants you.' 'Did you tell her it was I singing?' 'I had to, for she recognized the song; but don't be afraid, she took it all right.' So I went up, but I was scared all the same. Would you believe that she made me sing the song and made the Secretary of Legation play the accompaniment? He plays the piano, and Madame makes him come and teach her her songs, for she can't read music. At first he wouldn't accompany me, but Madame said to him, 'Don't be a donkey, Alfred'; and then he did, but he was mad about it. But the Spaniard was delighted and kept saying, 'Isn't this too Parisian!' When I got through, Madame said I was a perfect monkey. I didn't like that at first, but Virginie, who goes every night to the theatre with Madame and knows all those expressions, explained to me that it meant I should make a good actor. Comic opera, such as Madame sings, would be my style, so I'm taking music lessons. The stationer around the corner has a daughter who is a musician, and I take lessons from her, a franc a lesson. I'd like to go on the stage, for being groom to Madame doesn't lead to anything better. Now, there's promotion in your line."

"That's so. Not much at fifteen, but the Duchess has taken a fancy to me. To be sure, she doesn't have me sing her comic songs, that wouldn't do at our house; but she isn't a bit proud, and the reason she likes me is because I can always manage her ponies, which are

pretty gay sometimes. You know I was almost born on horseback, for father used to deal in horses when we lived at Clignancourt, and when I wasn't more than four or five years old he used to put me on one of those big trotters and start it at full gallop around the yard, and I had to stick on. At the Duke's there are eight of us in the stables, counting grooms and all. There is one horse called Sultan that no one but the Duchess and I can ride. The Duke tried it one day, but soon found himself on the ground."

"How much do you get?"

"A hundred francs a month, and the tips I get from visitors brings it up to two or three hundred more during the year. I am very lucky to get such a place, for now I can help mother. You see we had had trouble in our family on account of father; he failed in business, and then began to drink, and was cruel to mother. He has come down to driving one of those hideous cabs with a railing round the top, so that when I am on the box of the Duchess's carriage and see father on his dirty cab, with his coat in rags, I look the other way. But one day, five or six months ago, I was waiting for the Duchess at the door of a shop, when I saw father driving by with an old lady and a little dog in his cab. Without saying 'By your leave,' he stopped his horse, got down from the box, and coming over to me tried to borrow ten francs. I wouldn't let him have it because he is too unkind to mother; and I begged him not to speak to me when I was out with the carriage, as he was too ragged and would make me lose my place. He was furious and said he was my father, and I ought to

respect him. In the meantime, the old lady was calling out that she would be late, the little dog was barking, people stopped and laughed, and in the middle of all this the Duchess came out of the shop. Father hurried off, but the Duchess looked quite severe, and when we got home she scolded me for having talked on the sidewalk with a cab-driver. It was the first time she had ever scolded me, and I felt so bad that I began to cry. Then she asked me a lot of questions and I told her everything, how father drank and made mother so unhappy, and how he wanted me to let him have some money, but I wouldn't because I wanted mother to have all my wages, especially now that my little sister was sick."

"Is she sick? I remember when we all used to play together at Clignancourt."

"She's better now, but she was very sick then, and of course mother couldn't work, because she had to take care of her. The Duchess saw I was telling the truth, so she said, 'There, there, don't cry!' and asked me a lot of questions about mother and my little sister. The next day at four o'clock the carriage was at the door as usual; I was standing holding the door of the coupé open and waiting for orders, when the Duchess said, 'Where does your mother live?' I was so surprised, I said, 'My mother?' 'Yes, I am going to see her.' 'Number 7, Rue Puebla, but it is a part of the city Madame has never been in and up six flights of stairs, and *such* stairs!' 'Never mind that. Number 7, Rue Puebla!' When we got there the Duchess said, 'You go first and I will follow'; so we started. One hundred and twenty

stairs, and everywhere people's heads stuck out of their doors, for nothing like the Duchess had ever been seen there before. We went into mother's room, and the Duchess stayed there a good half-hour talking to my little sister, and promising her toys and nice things to eat. Then when she went away she handed mother two hundred francs, but mother wouldn't take them; she said she didn't need the money, that I was a good boy and had given her all my wages since my little sister had been sick. Then the Duchess gave me such a look that I knew she was pleased, and she patted me on the shoulder and said, 'That's right, Tom; you are a good boy.' I couldn't help crying, and yet I wanted to laugh at the same time; you know you feel that way sometimes."

"I know it. There's that tall, thin fellow at the theatre; he makes me laugh so hard that I get to crying."

"Well, since that day there isn't anything I wouldn't do for the Duchess. I would go through fire and water for her, and it makes me feel bad to see her in trouble."

"Is she in trouble?"

"Sometimes."

"Why?"

"On account of the Duke. For the last five or six months the Duke has not ridden with the Duchess in the mornings. I know he is not a very good rider, but down in the country he used to ride with the Duchess and me, always taking the quietest horse in the stables, however. But she rides well, I can tell you. All the land about belongs to them, and the Duchess likes to

ride straight across country, over fences, hedges, and ditches; one day we nearly rode over the priest. It was in the woods and we were going at full gallop, when, at the turn of the road, we came across the priest—the funniest little man—short and fat and round, a perfect ball; he doesn't walk, he rolls; there isn't another priest like him in France; as good as gold, but so funny. He had his nose in his breviary, and we didn't see him until we were right on him. We were on English hunters, who went like the wind, and I assure you if we had wanted to we could have jumped him easily. But the Duchess has so much respect for the Church that she stopped short, though I know she would have liked to try it. The Duke doesn't like to jump, and when the fence is too high he looks for a gate to get through; but the Duchess and I jump, she first and I afterward, and sometimes after she has cleared the fence she stops and turns to see how I do it, and then says, 'Bravo! Tom.' That makes the Duke mad, to think that we jumped and he hadn't pluck enough to try, so in Paris he very seldom rides with us. He sleeps until noon, generally, because he is out so late; sometimes he doesn't come in till six in the morning. He doesn't take out his own horses at night, so no one knows where he goes; he takes a cab, and Pauline, the Duchess's maid, says that's a bad sign, when a man has ten carriages of his own and yet takes a cab. He plays baccarat every night and loses a lot of money. He lost sixty thousand francs one night last week at the Epatant."

"At the Epatant? Madame's Spaniard goes there

every night, and I believe he has had great luck lately; perhaps he has won the Duke's money."

"Very likely."

"I can understand people gambling, and if it amuses the Duke, why shouldn't he? He is rich."

"Indeed he isn't. He had spent a great deal before his marriage, so there wasn't very much left. It is the Duchess's money that is going now."

"That's rather queer."

"What?"

"Why, your Duke takes the Duchess's money and loses it at the club to the Spaniard, who gives it to Madame Margot, and that's the way money circulates. Only that doesn't improve matters at your house."

"Not in the least."

"Do they quarrel?"

"Oh, no, there are never any scenes; the Duke is too much a man of the world, but there is trouble all the same. They still go out together occasionally in the evening, and often I turn on the box and look in through the little window in the front of the carriage; and there they are, one in each corner, never speaking, or even looking as if they knew each other. In the daytime the Duchess goes out by herself. She drives in the Bois, but never in the Allée aux Acacias; she never goes where she might meet any one she knows, and she often goes to see her mother, and when she comes back her eyes are all red. It was only the other day that the coachman said to me, 'Well, we have just been to mother's house to cry.' The Duchess often stops the carriage in front of a church, no matter which one, and goes in, and when

she comes out her eyes are all swollen, just as when she visits her mother."

"Just like Madame Margot last autumn. All of a sudden she would stop the carriage, not at one church only, but at three or four, in the afternoon, the Madeleine, Saint Roch, anywhere. She had trouble, too. Her last year's lover was a little cavalry officer; he rode in a steeplechase at La Marche; we all of us bet on him at Madame's. I put up ten francs that I've never seen since. He was coming in a good first when his horse stumbled and threw him on his head. He was unconscious for three days, during which time Madame burned wax candles in all the churches. She even climbed up one day to the new cathedral at Montmartre, because Madame Dubourg, the manicure, told her they had better candles there. Perhaps it's the same way with the Duchess; perhaps she has a lover that she is anxious about."

"A lover? Never! We see and hear a lot of things like that, but not about the Duchess. I would bet anything on it."

"Oh, you never can tell."

"Yes, you can in her case."

"It seems that such things do happen. Madame Margot knows the world, and she says women in society go in for that sort of thing just as much as actresses."

"Not the Duchess, and she could have plenty of lovers if she liked. You ought to see the men who ride in the Bois on the chance of meeting her. Now that the Duke doesn't ride with her, she makes her father come with us in spite of his rheumatism. You ought to see

her ride. I would serve her for nothing just for the pleasure of seeing her on horseback. There isn't her equal to be seen between the Arc de Triomphe and the Cascade. And I look at these young fellows who follow her, and think they are just wasting their time, and in the meantime, the Duke is in bed, sleeping off his last night's jollity. He doesn't deserve the handsomest wife in Paris."

"Not the handsomest."

"Yes, the very handsomest."

"Madame Margot is quite as good-looking."

"No one is anything like as good-looking. Here she comes."

The Duchess appeared, escorted respectfully by the manager of the shop. The two boys rose as she passed, but Tom, before following his mistress, whispered to Bob, "All I can say is, that the Duke is a fool if he goes to your house when he can stay at home."

THE HISTORY OF A BALL-GOWN

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HEN the fair dames of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote their memoirs they frankly introduced themselves to their readers in this fashion: "I have a dainty mouth," said the Marquise of Courcelles, "rosy lips, pearly teeth, good brow, soft cheeks, and sweet expression, finely modelled throat, lovely hands, passable arms, except that they are a little thin; but I find consolation for that misfortune in the fact that I have the shapeliest legs in the world."

I will follow the example of the charming marquise. Behold my portrait: Upper skirt of white gauze trimmed with fringe, and three flounces of blond lace alternating with the fringe; a court mantle of cherry-colored silk bordered with a deep flounce of blond, which falls over the fringe and is caught at intervals with knots of Marie-Antoinette satin; two more blond flounces are arranged behind at intervals above; on each side from the waist up are facings composed of tiny alternating ruffles of blond, fastened with satin rosettes; the puff behind is held by a flounce of white blond. The little white bodice has the front and the satin shoulder-straps trimmed with

blond. Girdle of red satin ornamented with a large red butterfly.

The world was finished in six days, I in three. And yet I too am in this world—a complicated world of silk, satin, lace, bows, and fringes. Did God rest while He was putting the world together? I do not know; but I do know that the scissors that fashioned me and the needle that sewed me rested not a minute from Monday evening, January 24, 1870, to Thursday morning, January 27th. The cuts of the scissors and the pricks of the needle hurt me very much at first, but I soon grew accustomed to them. I began to notice what was going on, to understand that I was becoming a frock, and to realize that the frock would be a marvel. From time to time the great M. Worth came himself to look at me. "Take in the seams," he would say, "add a bit more fringe, extend the train, enlarge the butterfly," etc.

One thing puzzled me: For whom was I intended? I knew the name, nothing more—the Baroness Z——. I should have liked Princess better; but still, Baroness was very well. I was ambitious. I dreaded the theatre. It remained to be seen whether the Baroness would be young, pretty, and equal to wearing me gracefully, and whether she had a figure that would display me to advantage. I was afraid of falling into the hands of an ugly woman, a provincial belle, or an elderly coquette.

How delightfully relieved I was as soon as I saw the Baroness! She was small, delicate, supple, *chic*, with a dainty waist, the shoulders of a goddess, and, besides all this, a certain little air of audacity, of raillery, but in charming moderation.

I was spread upon a large silver-gray couch, and received with frank admiration. M. Worth had been condescending enough to bring me himself, and he did not often do that.

"How original!" exclaimed the little Baroness; "absolutely novel! But very dear, isn't it?"

"One thousand and fifty francs."

"One thousand and fifty francs! And the lace was furnished by me! Ah, how quickly I should leave you, Monsieur, if I didn't owe you so much! For I owe you a great deal of money."

"Oh, very little, Baroness—very little!"

"No, no; a great deal. But we will settle that another time."

That evening I made my début in society, at the Tuileries. Both of us, the Baroness and I, had an undeniable success. When the Empress crossed the Salon of Diana, making gracious remarks to the right and left, she had the condescension to pause before us and make the following remark, which seemed to me extremely brilliant: "Ah, Baroness, what a frock—what a frock! It is a dream!" On that occasion the Empress wore a robe of white tulle dotted with silver, over a skirt of cloudy green, with epaulettes of sable. It was odd, not ineffective, but in doubtful taste.

We received much attention, the Baroness and I. The new Minister, M. Emile Ollivier, was presented to us; we received him coolly, as the little Baroness did not approve, I believe, of Liberal reforms, and expected nothing good from them. We had a long talk on the window-seat with Marshal Lebœuf.

At two o'clock we left the palace—the Baroness, I, and the Baron. For Madame had a husband, who for the time being was crowded in the corner of the carriage, and hidden under my voluminous skirts and my train, which were thrown on him in a fluffy heap.

"Confess, Edward," said the little Baroness—"confess that I looked pretty to-night."

"Very."

"And my frock?"

"Oh, charming!"

"You say that idly, without spirit or enthusiasm. I know you well. You think I have been extravagant. But I have not. Do you know how much this dress cost? Four hundred francs—not a centime more!"

We arrived at our home, which was a step from the Tuileries, in the Place Vendôme. The Baron went to his rooms, the Baroness to hers; and while Hermance, the maid, cleverly and quickly untied all my rosettes and took out the pins, the little Baroness repeated: "How becoming this frock is to me! And I seem to become it, too! I shall wear it on Thursday, Hermance, at the Austrian Embassy. Wait a bit, till I see the effect of that butterfly in the back. Bring the lamp nearer; nearer yet. Yes, that's it. Ah, how charming it is! I am enchanted with this frock, Hermance—positively enchanted!"

If the little Baroness was enchanted with me, I was not less enchanted with the Baroness. We two formed the most tender, the most intimate, and the most united of ties. We comprehended and completed each other so well. I had not to do with one of those mechanical

dolls—clumsily and brutally laced into a padded corset. Between the little Baroness and myself was absolutely nothing but lace and fine linen. We could confidently depend on each other. The beauty of the little Baroness was genuine beauty, needing no garniture, conjuring, or trickery.

The following Thursday I went to the Austrian Embassy, and a week later to visit the Princess Mathilde. But, alas! the next morning the little Baroness said to her maid: "Hermance, take that gown to the reserve stock. I love it, and I should like to wear it every evening; but it has been seen sufficiently for this winter. Yesterday several persons said to me, 'Ah, that is your frock of the Tuileries; it's your frock of the Austrian Embassy.' It must be given up till next year. Good-by, dear little frock!"

And, having said that, she nestled her rosy lips among my laces and kissed me in the dearest way in the world. Ah, how pleased and proud I was of that sweet and childish fellowship! I remembered that the evening before, on our return, the little Baroness had kissed her husband, but the kiss she had given him was a quick, dry kiss—one of those hurried kisses with which one wishes to get through; whereas my kiss had been prolonged and passionate. She had cordiality for the Baron, and love for me. The little Baroness was not yet twenty, but she was a coquette to the heart's core. I say this, first, to excuse her, and secondly, to give an exact impression of her character.

So at noon, in the arms of Hermance, I entered the reserve stock. It was a kind of dormitory of costumes

in a large room on the third story, and was lined with wardrobes of white oak, carefully locked. In the middle of the room was an ottoman, on which Hermance deposited me; after which she slid back ten or twelve wardrobe doors, one after another. Nothing but frocks and frills! I never should be able to tell how many. All were hung by silk tape on big triangles. Hermance, however, seemed much embarrassed.

"In the reserve," she murmured, "that is easy to say. But where is there any room? And this one needs so much." At last Hermance, having given little pushes to the right and left, succeeded in making an opening, into which I had great difficulty in sliding. Hermance gave me and my neighbors a few more little pushes to bring us together, and then shut the door. Darkness reigned. I was placed between a blue velvet robe and one of mauve satin.

Toward the end of April we received a visit from the little Baroness, and in consequence of that visit there was great commotion. Winter gowns were hung up; spring gowns were taken down. At the beginning of July came another visit, another commotion—the arrival of the costumes from the races; the departure of others for the watering-places. I lost my neighbor to the right, the mauve frock, and kept my neighbor on the left, the blue frock, a cross and crabbed character who was forever groaning, complaining, and saying to me, "Oh, my dear, you take up so much room! do get out of the way a little." I must admit that the poor blue velvet robe was much to be pitied. It was three years old, having been a part of the little Baroness's trousseau, and never

had been worn. "A high-neck blue velvet robe, at my age, with my shoulders and arms!" the little Baroness had exclaimed; "I should look like a grandmother!" Thus it was decreed, and the unfortunate blue robe had gone from the trousseau direct to the reserve stock.

A week or ten days after the departure of the costumes for Baden-Baden we heard a noise, the voices of women, and all the doors were opened. It was the little Baroness, who had brought her friend the Countess N——.

"Sit there, my dear, on that ottoman," said the little Baroness. "I have come to look over my gowns. I am very hurried; I arrived but just now from Baden, and I start again to-night for Anjou. We can chatter while Hermance shows me the gowns. Oh, those Prussians, my dear, the monsters! We have to run away, Blanche and I, like thieves. (Very simple frocks, Hermance, for every-day, and walking and boating costumes.) Yes, my dear, like thieves! They threw stones at us, real stones, in the Avenue of Lichtental, and called us 'Rascally Frenchwomen! French rabble!' The Emperor did well to declare war against such people. (Something for horseback, Hermance—my brown riding-habit.) But there is no need to be alarmed. My husband dined yesterday with Guy; you know, that tall Guy, who is an aide of Lebœuf. Well, we are ready, perfectly prepared, and the Prussians are not at all. (Very simple, I said, Hermance. You are showing me ball-gowns. I don't intend to dance while the war lasts.) And then, dear, it seems that this war was absolutely necessary from a dynastic point of view. I don't quite know why, but I tell it to you as I heard it. (These

dozen gowns, Hermance, will be sufficient. But there are thirteen. I never could take thirteen. Take away the green one; or, no, add another—that blue one; that's all.) Now let's go down, dear."

Whereupon she departed. So war was declared, and with Prussia! I was much agitated. I was a French robe, a Bonapartist! I feared for France and trembled for the dynasty, but the words of that tall Guy were quite reassuring.

For two months no news came; but about the tenth of September the little Baroness arrived with Hermance. She was very pale, poor little Baroness!—very pale and agitated.

"Give me dark gowns, Hermance," she said, "black gowns. I know! What remains of my mourning for Aunt Pauline? There must be many things. You see, I am too sad——"

"But if Madame expects to remain long in England?"

"Ah! as long as the Republic lasts."

"Then it may be a long time."

"What do you mean—a long time? What *do* you mean, Hermance? Who has told you such things?"

"It seems to me that if I were Madame I should take, for precaution's sake, a few winter gowns, a few evening costumes——"

"Evening costumes! What are you thinking of? I shall go nowhere, Hermance, alone in England, without my husband, who stays in Paris in the National Guard."

"But if Madame should go to pay her respects to their Majesties in England?"

"Yes, of course I shall do that, Hermance."

"Well, it is because I know Madame's feelings and views that——"

"You are right; put in some evening costumes."

"Will Madame take her last white satin frock?"

"Oh, no, not that one; it would be too sad a memory for the Empress, who noticed it at the last ball at the Tuileries. And then that frock wouldn't stand the voyage. My poor white satin! Shall I ever wear it again?"

That is the reason why I did not emigrate, and that is how I found myself blockaded in Paris during the siege. From the few words that we had heard of the conversation between the little Baroness and Hermance, we had a clear idea of the situation. The Empire had been overthrown and the Republic proclaimed. The Republic! Among us were several old family laces who had seen the first Republic—that of '93. The Reign of Terror! Ah, what tales they told! The fall of the Empire, however, did not displease these old laces, who were all Legitimists or Orleanists. Near me, draped over a gooseberry-satin skirt, were four flounces of lace that had had the honor of attending the coronation of Charles X. These were delighted, and kept repeating: "The Bonapartes brought about invasion; invasion brings back the Bourbons. Long live Henry Fifth!"

One idea, however, preoccupied us all. Should we remain in fashion? We were nearly all startling, striking, and loud—so much so that we were quite anxious, except three or four quiet costumes in velvet and dark cloth, who joined in the chorus of the old laces, and said:

"Ah, here is the end of the carnival, this masquerade of an Empire! Republic or monarchy, we care little; we are sensible and in good taste." We felt that they were right in saying this. From September to February we remained shut up in the wardrobes, arguing with one another, listening to the cannon, but knowing nothing of what was going on.

One day, toward the middle of February, all the doors were suddenly opened. It was our little Baroness—my little Baroness!

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "my frocks, my beloved frocks, there they are! how happy I am to see them!"

We could say nothing; but we, too, were very glad to see the little Baroness.

"Now, Hermance," continued the Baroness, "let us make a search. What should I take to Bordeaux? After such disasters I must have quiet and sombre costumes."

"Madame hasn't very many of that kind."

"What do you say, Hermance? Certainly I have dark costumes—this one and that one. There is that blue velvet robe! The blue velvet is just the thing, and I never have worn it."

So my neighbor the blue robe was at last taken down, and was about to make her début in the world. However, the little Baroness herself, with great energy, rummaged in the wardrobes.

"No more, only these," she said; "only four or five gowns. All the rest are impossible, and would not accord with the government we shall have in Bordeaux. I shall be compelled to have some republi-

can things made—very moderate republican, but still republican."

The little Baroness left us, but returned a month later, always with Hermance, who was an excellent maid, and highly esteemed by her mistress. A new deliberation ensued.

"Hermance," said the little Baroness, "what can I take to Versailles? I think we shall be able to allow ourselves a little more freedom. There will be receptions and dinners with Monsieur Thiers; and besides, the princes are coming. I might risk transition costumes. Do you know what I mean by that, Hermance —transition costumes?"

"Perfectly, Madame—silver-grays, mauves, violets, lilacs."

"Yes, that's it, Hermance; light but quiet colors. You are an invaluable maid. You understand me perfectly."

So the little Baroness started for Versailles with a collection of transition costumes. There must have been twenty. It was a good beginning, and it filled us with hope. She had begun at Bordeaux with sombre colors, and went to Versailles with light ones. Versailles was evidently only a stepping-stone between Bordeaux and Paris. The little Baroness would soon come back to Paris; and once the Baroness was in Paris we could feel sure that we should not stay long in the wardrobes.

But it happened that a few days after the departure of our mistress for Versailles, we heard loud firing beneath the windows of the house (we lived in the Place Vendôme). Was it another revolt, another revolution?

For a week nothing more was heard; there was silence. Then at the end of that week the cannonade began around Paris worse than ever. Was the war with the Prussians beginning all over again? Was this a new siege?

Days passed, and the boom of the cannon continued. Finally, one morning, there was a great racket in the courtyard of our house. We heard cries, threats, oaths! The noise mounted higher and higher. Heavy blows with the butt-ends of muskets were struck on the doors of the wardrobe. They were smashed in, and we perceived eight or ten slovenly, dirty, and bearded men. Among this group was a woman, a little brunette; rather pretty, no doubt, but oddly dressed. A short black skirt, little boots with red bows, a round, gray felt hat with a large red feather, and a sort of red sash worn crosswise. It was a peculiar style, but it was *chic* all the same.

"Oh, oh!" cried the little woman, "here's luck! What a lot of fine clothes! Clear away all this stuff, sergeant, and take it to headquarters."

Then the mob threw themselves upon us with a sort of fury. We felt ourselves gripped and dishonored by coarse, dirty hands.

"Don't soil them too much, citizens," the little woman exclaimed. "Roll them up in bundles, and take them down to the ammunition-wagon."

The headquarters was the apartment of the young woman who wore the red feather. Our new mistress was the wife of a general of the Commune. We seemed destined to remain official costumes. Official during

the Empire, and official during the Commune! The first thought of Madame General was to hold a review of us, and I had the honor of being the object of her particular attention and admiration.

"Ah, look, Emile!" (Emile was her General.) "See! this is the most stunning dress in the whole lot! I'll keep it to wear at the Tuileries."

I was to be kept for the Tuileries! What tales of sadness and what lamentations were heard in the sort of alcove where we were tossed like old rags! Madame went into society every evening, and never put on the same gown twice. My poor companions told me the day after their adventures of the day before. This one had dined at Citizen Raoul Rigault's, the Préfecture of Police; that one had attended a performance of *Andromaque* at the Théâtre Français, in the Empress's box. At last it was my turn. The 17th of May was the day of the grand concert at the Tuileries.

Oh, my dear little Baroness, what had become of you? Where were your long, soft, organdie petticoats and your fine white satin corsets? Where were your gauzy linen chemises? Madame General wore coarse petticoats of starched cotton! Madame General wore a fearful corset! Madame General had such a crinoline! My poor skirts of lace and satin were abominably stiffened and tossed about by the stiff crinoline hoops. As to the bodice, the strange thing happened that the bodice of the little Baroness was much too tight for Madame General at the waist-line, but, on the contrary, above the waist-line it was—I really do not know how to explain so delicate a matter. Well, it was just the opposite of

small, so much so that it had to be padded. Horrible! Most horrible!

At ten o'clock that evening I was mounting for the second time the grand staircase of the Tuileries, in the midst of a dense and ignoble mob. One of the General's aides-de-camp tried in vain to open a passage.

"Room, room, for the wife of the General!" he cried.

Much they cared for the wife of the General! Coarse, heavy boots trampled on my train, sharp spurs tore my laces, and the bones in Madame General's corsets hurt me terribly.

At midnight I returned to Madame General's den. I was in rags, shreds, soiled, dishonored, and stained with wine, tobacco, and mud. A detestable little maid tore me roughly from the shoulders of Madame General, and said to her mistress:

"Well, Madame, was it beautiful?"

"No, Victoria," replied Madame General, "it was too mixed. But do hurry up! tear it off, if it won't come. I know where to find others at the same price."

So I was tossed like a rag on a heap of pieces. This heap was composed of the ball-gowns of the little Baroness!

One morning, three or four days later, the aide-de-camp rushed in, crying, "The Versaillists! The Versaillists are in Paris!"

Thereupon Madame General assumed a sort of military costume, took two revolvers, filled them with cartridges, and hung them on a black leather belt which she wore around her waist. "Where is the General?" she said to the aide-de-camp.

"At the Tuileries."

"Very well, I shall go there with you." And she departed, with her little gray felt hat tilted jauntily over one ear.

The cannonade and firing increased and came nearer. Evidently they were fighting very near us, quite close to us. The next day, toward noon, we saw them both return, the General and Madame General. And in what a condition! Panting, frightened, forbidding, with clothes white with dust, and hands and faces black with powder. The General was wounded in the left hand; he had twisted around his wrist a handkerchief soaked with blood.

"Does your arm hurt?" Madame General said to him.

"It stings a little, that's all."

"Are they following us?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Listen! I hear noises, shouts."

"Peep out of the window without showing yourself."

"The red trousers! They are here!"

"Lock and bolt the door. Get the revolvers and load them. I can't do it because of my arm. This wound is a nuisance."

"You are so pale!"

"Yes; I am losing blood—a good deal of blood."

"They are coming up the stairs!"

"Into the alcove—let us go into your alcove, where the dresses are."

"Here they are!"

"Give me the revolver."

The door yielded suddenly under the hammering of the musket-butts. A shower of bullets fell on us and around us. The General, with a single movement, dropped heavily at full length on the bed of silk, muslin, and laces that we made for him. Three or four men in red trousers threw themselves on Madame General, who fought, bit, and screamed, "Assassins! assassins!"

A soldier tore away the bell-cord, tied her hands firmly, and carried her away like a bundle. She continued to repeat, in a strangled voice, "Assassins! assassins!" The soldiers approached the alcove and looked at the General. "As to him," they said, "there's an end of him! He doesn't need anything more. Let's be off."

They left us, and we lay there two days, crushed beneath that corpse and covered with blood. Finally, at the end of those two days, a man arrived who was called a commissioner, and who wore a tricolored sash around his waist. "This corpse has been forgotten," he said. "Take it away."

They tried to lift the body, but with fingers stiffened in death the General grasped my cherry satin butterfly. They had almost to break his fingers to draw it out.

Meantime the Commissioner examined and searched curiously among that heap of brilliant rags on which the General had died. My bodice appeared to catch his eye. "Here is a mark," he said to one of his men—"a mark inside this bodice, with the name and number of the maker. We can learn where these gowns came from. Wrap this bodice in a newspaper and I'll take it."

They wrapped me in an old number of the *Official Journal of the Commune*. The next day we went to M. Worth, the Commissioner and I. The conversation was not long.

"Was this gown made by you?" the Commissioner asked.

"Yes; here is my mark," M. Worth replied.

"And for whom was it made?"

"For Number 18,223. Wait a moment; I'll consult my books. The dressmaker came back soon, and said to the Commissioner, "This costume was made for the Baroness Z——, eighteen months ago, and it never was paid for."

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